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PROCESS EVALUATION AS A
RESEARCH MODEL IN A
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

by

Charlotte A. Gibson

B.A. (Hons.) Psychology
Wilfrid Laurier University
1983

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts degree
Wilfrid Laurier University
1986

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Abstract

A preventative one-on-one support program for students identified as "at risk" for school attendance problems utilized university volunteers as support persons, and existing attendance counsellors as supervisors of the program. A process evaluation of the program yielded descriptive information on the numerous methods of dealing with attendance in the various Waterloo County Board of Education Schools (e.g. Safe Arrival Program). Results indicated a controversial perception of the Attendance Department and a positive response to the university volunteer program. An unexpected result was that participating area children chose non-school personnel for assistance with problem-solving. There was a positive response to the program by participating children and a perceived need for administrative support by attendance counsellors.

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Introduction

The author's interest in truancy and nonattendance developed from a field placement requirement for an undergraduate course in Community Psychology. One year was spent working with an attendance counsellor at the Waterloo County Board of Education. As a participant-observer the author was able to examine how the Attendance Department functioned. As the year progressed it became increasingly evident that school attendance counsellors were functioning in a burnout environment and children were being underserved. There was a need to "transform an outmoded, ineffective child-care system into a tool for early resolution of problems" (Sobey, 1977, p. 8).

The needs of children have changed over the years. It is rare for a parent to keep a child home for the purpose of putting that child to work and problems with little boys running off to idyllic fishing streams are virtually nonexistent. In our fast and changing society, children today experience difficulties far more complex and abstract than any faced by early professionals. In response to this evolution of problems, the role of the school attendance counsellor has become vague and all encompassing. Their role is to counsel children on attendance but attendance

is not the problem. Nonattendance is a manifestation of one or many complex problems. The result is that counsellors are frustrated and children are underserved.

The present research focused on the issues of truancy and nonattendance. A participatory approach was utilized in which the researcher and attendance counsellors worked collaboratively to develop and implement an attendance program that is flexible enough to respond to the varying needs of today's children yet structured enough to reduce job ambiguity and role conflict of the attendance counsellors. The development, implementation and evaluation of the university volunteer attendance program spanned a three year period. In the first year the author was the only university volunteer to meet with children who had been identified as being at risk for nonattendance. Resulting from this successful experience the author designed, co-ordinated and supervised an intervention program utilizing several university volunteers who met with many children who had been identified as being at risk for nonattendance. In the third year the Waterloo County Board of Education attendance counsellors supervised the university volunteers with the author acting in a consulting capacity. This approach was developed to help attendance counsellors develop their own competencies (Mann, 1978) and enhance the utilization of the ensuing program (Patton, 1980).

Review of Literature

Absenteeism & Truancy Literature

Absenteeism and truancy rates continue to increase (Kaeser, 1979). Accelerating rates have prompted the development of various identification and intervention programs. Consideration of prevention programs must be preceded by an understanding of past attempts to address the truancy problem (Rogus, 1983).

Problem identification. Several Boards of Education have contracted researchers to study truancy and absenteeism. Researchers have documented the existence of the problem (Cutbill, 1980; Carson, 1981), identified characteristics of students exhibiting truant behaviour (Busch, 1976; Kohler 1976, Douglas & Ross, Fogleman, 1978; Gussett, 1976; Habeton, 1967; Lloyd, 1976; Moos, 1978; Rozelle, 1968; Sharples, 1979; Stennett, 1967; Tyerman, 1968; Williams, 1976; Yudin, 1973; Stennett & Isaacs, 1980), examined absenteeism and school characteristics (Tyerman, 1968; Douglas & Ross, 1965; Moos, 1978) and reassessed the role of the School Attendance Counsellor (Cochrane, 1980).

In a paper prepared for the Hamilton Board of Education, Cutbill (1980) made recommendations for counsellors in junior schools on how "to deal with early

identification of patterns of nonattendance in the primary grades" (1980, p. 2). Cutbill outlines attendance procedures, specific problems and guidelines for dealing with nonattendance. The paper identifies specific types of nonattenders and gives possible solutions. For example, in the case of children who are always absent Mondays or Fridays Cutbill suggests showing the attendance calendar to parents. This program has a focus on the teacher as initiator. Teachers today are already overwhelmed with extra duties and activities related to the teaching of the "special child" at both ends of the continuum. Few teachers would have the physical time to "visit the home with an Adjustment Counsellor" (Cutbill, 1980, p. 3). In theory the recommendations are good but without being tested utilization is limited.

Similarly, a report for the Seattle Public Schools by Carson et al. (1981) puts a heavy responsibility on the teachers as initiators for correcting nonattendance. Carson points out that "attendance problems constitute the greatest dilemma for the School District in the general area of discipline... and must be considered a major problem" (1981, p. 15). The report recommends "a firm stand on mandatory attendance" with suspension used only as a last resort for correcting the problem. A five-step procedural format is presented for dealing with unexcused

absences.

Both the Hamilton and Seattle reports are very basic. They deal with nonattendance by proposing rigorous guidelines as a means of correcting the problem. A similar volume of research has been devoted to the identification of the characteristics of students who are truant.

Busch (1976) and Kohler (1976) independently identified similar symptoms in truants and dropouts. Both researchers reported the following characteristics:

- "1. Underdeveloped reading and academic skills.
2. Negative self image.
3. Negative attitude toward school.
4. Lack of involvement in extracurricular activities.
5. Stressful family situations.
6. Lack of personally satisfying experiences with other students or teachers.
7. Intense personal problems unrelated to the school experience.
8. Anxiety because of economic need."

(Rogus, 1983, p. 72).

Each study demonstrated that dropping out of school is the final expression of dissatisfaction on the part of students who either do not have the ability or support from others to achieve scholastic goals, who are pushed out of school, who need special attention that cannot be provided, or who are difficult to manage.

(Rogus, 1983, p. 72).

These characteristics have also been documented by many researchers. Douglas and Ross (1965), Fogelman

(1978), and Stennett (1967) examined absence from school and student characteristics. Norms by sex and grade indicated that "girls tend to be absent more than boys at every grade (level) and students in the primary and senior divisions miss more school than those in the junior and intermediate divisions" (Stennett & Isaacs, 1980, p. 7).

The relationship between absence from school and poor academic achievement has also been documented (Douglas, 1965; Fogelman, 1978; Gussett, 1967; Hambleton, 1967; Karweit, 1973; Moos, 1978; Rozelle, 1968; Williams, 1976). The spectrum of studies encompassed all grades and educational programs (i.e., academic to vocational). The negative effects of absenteeism could not be neutralized by either intelligence or socioeconomic status.

Humbleton (1967), Lloyd (1976), Sharples (1979), Stennett (1979) and Yudin (1973) all investigated the relationship between absenteeism and dropout. Their studies confirmed that poor attenders have a greater tendency to dropout than regular attenders.

While Busch (1976) and Kohler (1976) reported that truants tend to have a negative attitude toward school, Hambleton (1967), Karweit (1973) and Moos (1978) confirmed the flip-side and reported that good attenders tend to have a positive attitude toward school and their teachers.

Studies have also documented the difficulties poor

attenders experience in areas of adjustment to school and family and peer relationships (Karweit, 1973). Karweit (1973) also reports that the poor attender demonstrates little participation in non-academic school activities.

Research has also documented the existence of a significant relationship between poor attendance and a family's low socioeconomic status (Douglas & Ross, 1965; Fogleman, 1978, Galloway, 1976; Tyerman, 1968); between poor attendance and overcrowded living conditions (Fogleman, 1978); between poor attendance and single-parent homes (Levanto, 1975; Scott, 1978; Sharples, 1979; Stennett, 1979), and between poor attendance and inadequate discipline (Stennett and Issacs, 1980).

Tyerman (1968) and Douglas and Ross (1965) provided evidence to show that there are more poor attenders in vocational and technical schools than academic schools with high standards. School policy, teacher expectations and attitude also influence student attendance (Kooker, 1976; Lietz; 1976; Moos, 1978; Karweit, 1973). Moos (1978) also demonstrated the association between classroom climate and attendance. For example, classes which children find enjoyable tend to be better attended.

A large portion of the literature on truancy deals with description or identification rather than intervention. Intervention research can be classified as follow-

ing either a punitive or a developmental approach to prevention.

Punitive approach to prevention. Kohler (1976) feels that "punitive approaches reflect more concern for the system than for youngsters, more concern for the maintenance of order than with helping students learn and develop" (p. 72).

Until legislation of the Young Offenders Act (April, 1984), truancy was considered a crime to be punished. Under the Juvenile Delinquents Act both parents and children could be charged. Following suit many educators used aversive consequences as a negative reinforcement of school attendance in hopes of preventing truant behaviour. A frequent approach that is still in effect is to suspend students for not attending classes. In the past, elementary schools resorted to physical punishment (the strap) and numerous children still receive detentions for nonattendance.

One extreme example of a punitive approach is presented by the Ferndale District in the state of Michigan. The "no excuse necessary" approach puts the responsibility of attendance on the individual student. The approach has reduced absenteeism by half. Students are responsible for their own attendance. Excuse notes are not necessary but copies of form letters are mailed to parents after a

student's third, seventh and twelfth absence. Once the absences exceed twelve, one course credit is lost. Blaming the victim is easier than seeking alternative causes. Punishing the behaviour without examining cause is a victim-blaming strategy (Ryan, 1971). All of the above punitive actions avoid "the causes of the problem and are likely to hasten the truant's movement toward dropping out" of school (Rogus et al., 1983, p. 72).

Developmental approaches to prevention. Not all literature focuses on documentation or punitive interventions. There is a large body of literature examining a developmental approach to the problem of truancy. This section will discuss the various developmental approaches and address their effectiveness both in reduction of non-attendance and in dissemination to other Boards and/or programs.

Truancy is more clearly apparent at the secondary level when students start dropping out of school. Therefore, a majority of developmental interventions address this target population. Intervention strategies under a developmental categorization can be further classified as individual, program or organizational-focused programs.

The largest focus of concentration has been on using trained personnel to counsel students either individually

or in groups. In one study presented by Rodell (1979), the basic assumption was that the school system as it functions is responsible for truant behaviour and must "place pressure on itself rather than on the individual child" (p. 262) to change. Rodell examined the effect of group meetings on public school children exhibiting truant behaviour. He had three small groups, two experimental and one control. The control group consisted of 11 children. The experimental group that started in the first quarter had seven children enrolled, with nine children beginning the program in the second quarter. The group met weekly for 55 minutes where an experimenter/leader first led discussions in areas of "common interest." The essence of Rodell's intervention was to discuss and then act on the suggestions that arose from the group (e.g., procuring an automobile engine and arranging both in class and out of class instruction). The results in the area of attendance were impressive. The first quarter experimental group improved attendance by 41% over baseline data; the second quarter experimental group improved attendance by 20%; while the control group missed 5% more classes.

Nevertheless as an empirical study, the research as presented is riddled with problems and ambiguities. First, no mention is made of sex or age of the children in the study other than the words "Public School" in the

title. As stated by the author, "subjects were not randomly assigned" (Rodell, 1979, p. 258). Participants did not all meet the 20 day absent criterion. Baseline data contained children who had received treatment. Age or sex of experimenter/leader were not given and it was purely subjective whether the behaviour of key school personnel changed as a result of associations with group meetings.

The study clearly proposes that "one can change patterns of action by affecting the social systems that provide the antecedent conditions and contingencies for such behaviour" (Rodell, 1979, p. 258). However, the research limits itself to "contingencies within the school system" (Rodell, 1979, p. 257) and even here the problems and flaws in the study limit the usefulness of the data.

One actual intervention study that did yield positive data with respect to attendance problems was carried out by Bry and George (1980) in an urban elementary school. Forty seventh graders with school adjustment problems (e.g., absent from school an average of 22 days during the sixth grade and a D+ GPA) were randomly assigned to either the intervention program or to a control group.

The actual program consisted of four steps. First information was collected about each student's actions by examining the attendance register and by interviewing the teacher. Next, positive as well as negative feedback was

given to the student and/or their parents about their actions. A value was attached to each student's actions. They received a point for each day at school with no disciplinary action, a point for each "yes" their teacher marked on their weekly report (e.g., homework done?), and points for obeying meeting rules (e.g., don't talk while another is talking). The students met weekly with a group leader and discussed how they could earn more points. A certain number of points allowed students to take an extra school trip each semester.

The results indicated that the attendance and grades of the control students deteriorated whereas the program students remained the same. It is interesting to note that the preventive effect did not occur until after two years of attending the program and an outcome evaluation at the end of the first year would not have yielded positive results.

In one- and five-year follow-up studies, Bry (1982) suggested that her intervention reduced delinquency problems both in schools and in the community. Bry's work clearly demonstrated success in improving adolescent's behaviour both in school and in the community. However, the program was not continued and made no further impact beyond that of a research article.

The most comprehensive study reviewed used a two-

phase "attendance alert, intervention system," and was instituted by Bauer et al. (1976) in two elementary and four high schools in Los Angeles County area. The first phase involved phoning the parent on the third day of absence, sending the parent a letter on the fifth consecutive day requesting an interview on the tenth consecutive day and finally a home visit after 12 to 15 days of absence. The second phase involved the counselling of students upon their return to school with appropriate referrals or measures being taken.

The Bauer study used the clerical staff available at the schools to monitor attendance and noted that personnel problems were the most difficult to surmount within the two elementary target schools. Considerable time was devoted to "maintaining morale as these employees felt they were assigned unwelcomed tasks" (1976, p. 23).

Two hundred and fifty-four (254) high school students returned to school after step one of phase one (i.e. a phone call). One hundred and seventy-eight (178) students entered phase two (i.e. pupil counselling and curriculum/program modification). This part of the program overlapped steps two through four when it was apparent in the early stages that "class changes, school transfer, psychological testing or medical referral" (1976, p. 40) were necessary.

While the actual number of students who returned to

school is impressive, the Bauer study encountered several problems. The fact that no staff was added raises concerns expressed by Bauer. Increased responsibility without monetary reinforcement is rarely received with enthusiasm. The Bauer study mentioned that at one school "the secretary became so upset about having to call parents concerning attendance that the principal withdrew his school from the field trials" (1976, p. 23). In addition "record keeping errors and attendance accounting errors apparently occurred because of substitutes who replaced trained clerical and teaching personnel" (1976, p. 24). Bauer also cites the heavy workload of counsellors as hampering the program by preventing them from committing "sufficient time to the intervention phases" (1976, p. 25). The fact that "no funds were available for late afternoon and evening calls" (1976, p. 25) hindered reaching many parents who worked during the day. Finally, two months is too short a period of time to expect significant results from an intervention program. The program is comprehensive and detailed but does contain definite weaknesses which can account for its discontinuation.

In addition to individual and family counselling, interventions focusing on the individual include: adult and peer tutoring, contingency contracting, parent-contract programs, team conferencing involving community key infor-

ments, time out programs and peer appeal for attendance (Arnold, 1983, p. 73).

Interventions focusing on programs are fewer in comparison to interventions focusing on individuals and include: basic curriculum revision, schedule changing and program revision, alternative schools, in-house suspensions and reinforcement for classes with excellent attendance (Arnold, 1983, p. 73).

One attempt to alter truant patterns of behaviour is to accommodate students' individual levels of aptitude. School administrators are constantly working at redefining and tailoring programs to meet individual needs. A recent attempt (WCBE Circular HSl, 1979) recommended four levels of programming: Modified, Basic, General and Advanced.

Alternative level programming is based on the assumption that past performance (i.e., behaviour, marks, attendance) is a predictor of future performance. Statistical data are available examining both the overall student drop-out rate and the gender, age and program factors in that decline. Gibson (1984) examined the effect of Four Level Programming or Circular HSl on students identified as "at risk" for attendance problems before entering high school by comparing their grade eight attendance records with their attendance record in grade nine. The results

indicated that children identified in elementary school as poor attenders do not significantly improve their attendance behaviour in high school despite efforts to tailor programs to meet individual needs. Contrary to popular opinion, a significant number of students identified as poor attenders enter the General Level Program in high school, warranting an examination of factors other than curriculum in the study of poor attendance behaviour.

Felner et al (1982) focused on schedule changing and program revision in their attempt to reduce truancy. By reducing the state of flux in the school, researchers were able to reduce absenteeism, maintain a stable self-concept and induce more positive feelings about the social climate of the school. The study did yield positive results and should be implemented in grades seven and nine to reduce transition problems. However, a criterion for inclusion in the program was that students meet all grade nine academic and attendance requirements. Chronic attendance problems were excluded. In summary, the program was successful but limited in application to students not exhibiting absenteeism.

During the past five years, a major development in education is the emergence of alternative schools and programs.

Increased publicity through numerous periodicals and books; professional awareness and en-

dorsements; financial support from federal and local authorities, and new teacher education programs

(Hume, 1984, p. 15)

have all encouraged the rapid and continual growth of alternatives. Alternative schools and programs include:

open schools; mini schools; special schools; experimental schools; experiential schools; dropout schools; nongraded schools; continuous progress schools; open concept schools; adult schools; community schools and annex schools.

(Hume, 1984, p. 15)

Alternative programs are intended to provide increased options in meeting the needs of the community. However, because of their novelty they may grow too quickly and end up diverting energy toward survival rather than development.

One "annex school" called ARMS was developed by the Waterloo County Board of Education to assist students who feel they need some "time out" from the regular school system. One aim of the ARMS program is to allow young people a period of time to evaluate themselves and their attitude toward their family, friends, others and the future. The overall objectives of the program are to improve:

A - Attitude - a positive attitude toward themselves and their actions in the context of their environment.

R - Responsibility - accepting responsibility for their own actions in all situations (work and social)

M - Motivation - self motivation

S - Skills - academic, vocational and interpersonal skills.

The ARMS program has been operating successfully for several years. However, the criteria for entry are being 14 years of age and being unable to function within the regular school system. In other words, only chronic truants are referred.

One form of intervention that is employed as a last resort is the transfer of students to another school in hopes of reducing his/her truant behaviour.

In summary of this section it is important to note that despite continued efforts, truancy continues to increase at a burgeoning rate. Further examination of the problem must consider that:

- (1) Many previous studies demonstrated positive results but were either discontinued or were not disseminated (Bry, 1980; Felner et al., 1982).
- (2) No previous study collaborated with existing attendance personnel in developing, co-ordinating and supervising programs aimed at reducing nonattendance.

Fairweather et al. (1969) noted that "demonstrating the potential success of a new program is not the same as changing established patterns of professional practice"

(p. 101). In order to reduce resistance and to avoid documents being shelved without consideration, future research must take into account the environmental context of the future program, the needs of existing personnel and the evaluative model most conducive to program acceptance and continued growth.

Environmental Context of School Attendance Programs.

Program developers must consider the educational context within which a program will function. The rationale behind adopting past approaches must be examined in order to assess the difficulties that may arise in developing an intervention program within an educational context. To effect change and resolution, change agents must consider: the intense pressure under which administrators function, limited resources, the perception of truancy as a problem and the culture of the school.

In addition to mounting pressure to meet existing educational goals, boards of education in Ontario must gear up to meet the implementation standards of Bill 82 and provide all children with an education that allows for the development of their individual potential. Under such circumstances

it is understandable that there is little time left for school administrators to concern themselves with the large problems imposed by the

homes from which the children come and the school environmental settings.

However, to ignore the homes and the culture of the school is to be blind "to real and vital needs" (Cochrane, 1980, p. 6) of some children.

Shrinking resources are a way of life in today's society. Limited human, physical and temporal resources inhibit administrators in the close examination of difficulties as complex as truancy. Currently, the Waterloo County Board of Education employs five attendance counsellors who provide service to 106 schools and 48, 746 children (1983 statistics). Clearly, the limited resources available warrant an examination of alternative measures.

Truancy and drop out are perceived as problems restricted to the Secondary School Level. High school students are considered to have problems (i.e., motivation, poor skills, behaviour problems etc.) whereas elementary truants have in the past been considered "bad" or abnormal. High school interventions have focused on

crisis rather than development. An effective preventive approach must commence with the beginning of school (or earlier), and it must extend through the school years.

(Arnold, p. 74)

School personnel often behave in ways that suggest they are not responsible for the truancy problem but are obligated to solve it in isolation. To admit that a

truancy problem exists in their school is to admit failure (Sarason, 1982). In addition, teachers and administrators are trained to instruct youngsters. "Few school administrators or teachers have had preparation in network building, resource sharing or in building constituencies" (Arnold, 1983, p. 74). A report by Cochrane (1980) clarified the role of the school attendance counsellor, and recommended that the role of the school attendance counsellor shift from one of "truant officer" to one of "resource person".

Intervention programs must not only prove themselves effective but also acceptable within the environmental context which they are intended to function. Effective change requires decreased resistance, increased skill, and expanded use of community resources.

Problems may also arise when concerns of program participants conflict. For example, superintendents and/or Board members may be interested only in the cost-effectiveness of the program; school personnel may be interested in identifying what is happening but may have concerns that the intervention program doesn't interfere with school functioning; school attendance counsellors may perceive the program evaluation as a threat to their employment, which could result in resistance and/or unrealistic feedback; finally, researchers, depending on

their background and/or requirements (e.g. course paper, thesis) may insist on strict experimental design. There are many stakeholders in program development and evaluation. Program developers must consider the needs of superintendents, board members, school personnel, school attendance counsellors, volunteers, children and researchers, because conflicts arising from different interests could result in reports being shelved without consideration and future resistance to both program development and assessment.

Models of Program Evaluation

Evaluation research can determine the effectiveness of various intervention strategies and/or the reasons why a program is not operating as designed or meeting its stated objectives. This information can assist decision-makers in their modification of a program to ensure a more "efficient and effective intervention" (Rowe, 1981, p. 4).

Evaluation methods must appropriately address the type of question being asked. This section will briefly describe the various evaluation research models and their limitation in human service programs before presenting a model conducive to the implementation of the proposed attendance program.

Simply stated evaluation research can assist funders and administrators in their decision to:

- 1) continue or discontinue a program

- 2) improve practices and/or procedures
- 3) add or drop specific program strategies and techniques
- 4) institute similar programs elsewhere
- 5) allocate resources among existing programs
- 6) accept or reject a specific program approach or theory (Weiss, 1972, p. 17).

There are three main evaluation models:

- 1) Cost-effectiveness (efficiency)
- 2) Outcome (summative, goal attainment)
- 3) Process (formative, systems)

Cost-effectiveness (efficiency) evaluation. A cost-effectiveness (efficiency) evaluation is concerned with determining the cheapest strategy of achieving desired results. "Efficiency is concerned with the evaluation of alternative paths or methods in terms of cost" (Suchman, 1967, p. 64), or in other words the cost in money, cost in time, cost in personnel and public convenience. In a sense it represents a ratio between effort and performance.

In the area of human service programs some of the major criticisms of a cost-effectiveness analysis include:

- 1) Improved mental health is difficult to price
- 2) Putting a value on human life is impossible (The elderly and children will always represent a

negative dollar value because of their low earning power).

- 3) It degrades human life. Life is priceless.

Outcome evaluation. An outcome evaluation addresses the question "Does the program achieve the desired results?" It involves a decision about continuing or discontinuing a program. Despite the fact that human service will never be discontinued (i.e. we will continue to educate and care for young people), outcome evaluations continue to be the dominant model used. For example, one variation is conducted for administrators and/or funders and involves the systematic testing of predicted program results in comparison to a control group who have not had the program experience. This type of true experimental design is difficult if not impossible to implement in human service research.

It is very difficult to undertake a strict experimental study with human subjects where some (who are referred to the program because they have problems) are randomly assigned to a nontreatment group for the purpose of comparison. In addition matching comparison groups for the purpose of conducting an experimental research evaluation raises a whole new area of concern. Aside from observable differences in characteristics (i.e., age, sex, severity of problem), there are also differences between attendance

procedures at various schools, type of school, number of students and socioeconomic location. All these factors may influence the effectiveness of a program and should be taken into consideration.

When planning evaluation research one has to consider how much value to put on component parts. Outcome evaluation looks at just the outcome of a program. Successful parts not reflected by the outcome measures may be lost in this type of evaluation. For example, a family counseling program may demonstrate a dramatic effect on improved family relations and patterns of communication but prove unsuccessful on the outcome measures of school attendance and/or grade point average. Possibly nonattendance in that particular area is due to a high concentration of video arcades, heavy peer pressure or low socioeconomic status. An outcome measure of attendance and/or grades would lose valuable information on the various parts of the program.

The major limitation of an outcome evaluation is that it can only be applied to fully developed, clearly defined programs. To assume that all programs have been implemented as intended is as foolhardy as assuming that all implemented programs are successful.

Process evaluation. In contrast a process evaluation assists in determining appropriate adjustments while the program is developing toward its stated goals. An initial step in a process evaluation is to determine whether or not the program is actually functioning and whether or not all resources are being used. A process evaluation is concerned with examining what is happening. It focuses on improving practises and procedures.

Evaluation can provide a knowledge base for planning but until a program is fully operational, an environment must be provided that encourages "new organizational structures, innovative approaches and/or procedures to be tried out on a very flexible and easily reversible basis" (Rowe, 1981, p. 12). Programs at this stage should be assessed by means of a process evaluation to improve practises and procedures. The focus of interest is on identification (i.e., What is working?), improvement (i.e., How can it be made better?) and the utilization of results (i.e., The acceptance and institution of the program elsewhere) (Rowe, 1981).

A process evaluation examines all the component parts of a program and studies the links between those parts. The structure (i.e. supervision, co-ordination of volunteers, resources) of the program is outlined in terms of service delivery and stated program goals. The clients

(i.e. children) are identified in terms of need for program involvement and the resources (i.e. volunteers) are evaluated in terms of time/cost related to the attainment of program goals.

To quote Etzioni (1969)

The starting point for this approach is not the goal itself but a working model of a social unit which is capable of achieving a goal. Unlike a goal or a set of activities, it is a model of a multifunctional unit.

(p. 261)

The application of such a model would allow information from the evaluation to be fed back into the program to assist with future program decisions and modifications.

Purpose of the Present Study

The overall goal of the present research is to assist children who have difficulty attending school. The first step in addressing the issue of non-attendance is the systematic collection of information regarding attendance in the Waterloo County Board of Education. At the present time five attendance counsellors attempt to meet the needs of 106 schools and 48,425 elementary and secondary students (1985 figures). According to data collected by the Waterloo area attendance counsellors in June 3, 1983, identifying "habitually absent students" there were 559 "potential" or "active" attendance problems. The survey was conducted only in elementary schools and the Attendance Department estimated that the figure could be doubled if high school nonattenders were included. The statistics indicate that there is a need for increased manpower in the area of attendance. One alternative is the use of university volunteers to provide support to children referred to the Attendance Department as being "at risk" for developing problems either resulting from nonattendance or possibly leading to nonattendance and/or dropout.

This study gathered information that was used to assist with the development of an attendance program. The

program was implemented in such a manner that enabled the Waterloo County Board of Education attendance counsellors to develop their own competencies in co-ordinating, supervising, monitoring and evaluating the ensuing attendance program. The study was designed so that the product of the research would enhance the functioning of the Waterloo County Board of Education Attendance Department. Specific objectives of the research were to determine:

1. How attendance was being handled in Waterloo County area schools.
2. The perceptions that Waterloo County Board of Education schools had of the Attendance Department.
3. The awareness that area schools had of the university volunteer program that was under the supervision of the Attendance Department and the researcher.
4. The perception of the university volunteer attendance program by participating schools.
5. Any differences in the perceptions of the Attendance Department between those schools that participated in the university volunteer attendance program and those schools that did not participate in the program.
6. The perceptions of the university volunteer

attendance program by participating WCBE elementary and high school students.

7. The perceptions of the university volunteer attendance program by the five area attendance counsellors.

8. Did participants want to see the program continue?

Previous programs in the area of attendance were time-limited and were not disseminated. To date research in this area has excluded key personnel who have a vested interest in the outcome of research and/or programs dealing with attendance. For example, no study utilized attendance counsellors in the planning and/or implementation of attendance research. In order to establish and maintain a collaborative relationship between the researcher and the Attendance Department several tasks were undertaken by the Attendance Department, in co-operation with the researcher.

1. The preparation of a program information package.
2. The supervision of university volunteers in their field placement settings.
3. The development of a slide presentation describing the university volunteer program.
4. The development of information gathering devices.

A substudy designed and implemented by the attendance counsellors was collated and analyzed by the researcher in order to identify and define problem areas.

Nonattendance has always been perceived as someone's failure. Teachers, schools and/or attendance counsellors tend to de-emphasize problems in the area of attendance under the faulty assumption that to acknowledge the need for assistance is to acknowledge a lack of competence. Human service programs that focus on assisting children will rarely be discontinued. They will modify as needs change. Energies must be combined and directed toward developing programs that are able to meet the changing needs of today's children. Therefore, in order to reduce the anxiety of the attendance counsellors and to enhance their involvement, a process evaluation was undertaken.

In summary, the researcher worked "with" the Attendance Department to develop a program that both met the needs of area children and was accepted by the attendance counsellors. The rationale and format was one of "common sense". However, the inclusion of the researcher as consultant ensured that the study and ensuing program was "consciously and expertly applied" (Sarason, 1972, pp. 327-328).

Method

Participants

There were three groups of participants. The first group consisted of all key attendance personnel in the 90 schools that participated. This figure represented 85% of the 106 schools that were contacted and requested to complete Questionnaire I (Appendix A). Eighty-six of the participating schools could be identified. Four schools did not indicate their name and were not included in the final results. The response rates by geographic area were as follows: 22 NORTH area schools (71%); 15 EAST area schools (75%); 22 WEST area schools (92%) and 27 SOUTH area schools (87%) returned their questionnaire. Ten secondary schools (71%) and 80 elementary schools (87%) participated in the study.

The second group of participants consisted of 25 elementary students participating in the university volunteer attendance program. Thirteen male and 12 female students completed Questionnaire II (Appendix B). There were 13 grade one students, one grade four student, one grade five student, seven grade seven students and three grade eight students who completed questionnaires. There were three high school students and four elementary stud-

ents who were referred to the program but who did not complete the questionnaire because they were unavailable at the time of distribution (i.e. they were no longer in the program, transferred schools or were absent).

Four out of a possible five attendance counsellors employed by the Waterloo County Board of Education comprised the third group of participants and completed Questionnaire III (Appendix C).

Procedure

The research spanned a three year period. In the first year, the researcher worked under the supervision of one attendance counsellor and met on a one-on-one basis with Waterloo County Board of Education children who were considered "at risk" for attendance problems.

In the second year, the researcher collated and analyzed results from a survey already executed by the Attendance Department and supervised eight university volunteers who met on a one-on-one basis with 17 elementary and 10 secondary school students. With the help of the attendance counsellors, the researcher gathered attendance records for those students in grade nine who were identified as poor attenders in grade eight and examined the effect of various levels of programming on their attendance. The researcher and the attendance counsellors also prepared an information package in the second year. The

program information package (Appendix D) included:

- 1) a statement of the program's philosophy
- 2) an outline of the goals for volunteers
- 3) background information on the need for the program
- 4) a description of the referral process
- 5) the theoretical linkage between program goals and activities
- 6) a flow chart of the school attendance program
- 7) the major service activities and program components

The information package was used to familiarize both new volunteers and potential schools with the university volunteer program. Co-ordination of volunteers and attendance staff in the schools was the responsibility of the researcher.

In the third year of the program, the researcher worked in a consulting capacity with the Attendance Department. Five area attendance counsellors supervised 12 university volunteers meeting with 45 area children.

Questionnaire I (Appendix A) and Questionnaire II (Appendix B) were designed collaboratively by the researcher and the Attendance Department. Questionnaire III (Appendix C) was designed by the researcher. The results were analyzed by the researcher and discussed by the Attendance Department at year end planning sessions. A

slide presentation collaboratively prepared by one attendance counsellor and the researcher is available for:

- 1) education
- 2) future volunteer recruitment
- 3) future placement procurement
- 4) feedback for other board department/administrators

When a student entered the program he/she met with a university volunteer with limited restrictions for confidentiality (e.g., The university volunteer would break confidence if the student appeared in danger or threatening to run). The number of meetings varied from one per year to weekly depending on the nature of the referral. The environment was nonthreatening and the student was encouraged to explore a variety of courses of action. When applicable, students were provided with information about high school, university and/or available resource persons. Students were encouraged to seek out assistance when needed and praised for regular attendance and good work habits.

The actual in-school program consisted of an initial interview where the student was introduced to the university volunteer; the program was explained; and an assessment was made of student's response to participate. Students who were willing to participate were given a consent form (Appendix E) to be completed by their parents before

they were allowed to participate in the program. Children with signed parental consent met with an undergraduate to establish the student's area of difficulty (e.g., home, school, lack of information) and set up mutually convenient appointment times. The number of the sessions varied from one or two informational meetings to ongoing weekly sessions.

University volunteers also consulted with key informants in the school (i.e., teacher, vice-principal, attendance counsellor) to clarify ambiguous background information and/or any possible assistance the student/family was already receiving from other sources (e.g., Big Brothers, Children's Aid). The volunteers were required to attend regular meetings at the university to share experiences, gain support and/or encouragement, examine difficulties and discuss a variety of alternative actions. Resource persons (i.e., behavioral consultants, attendance counsellors) were introduced and made available for questions. Various skills (i.e., active listening) were discussed and practised.

The program was organized to allow university volunteers to work with and receive direct support from professionals in the school system (Appendix F) as well as the program coordinator. The program coordinator, while not directly involved with high risk students, assisted the

volunteers in their placements and with any difficulties that arose from their individual meetings with students.

The attendance counsellors were asked to comment on questionnaires designed for area schools and students participating in the program (Appendices A & B).

Process Measures

Three questionnaires provided descriptive information on the input, process and outcome of the university volunteer program in relation to the Attendance Department.

Questionnaire I (Appendix A) was mailed from the Waterloo County Board of Education by regular school mailing to key attendance personnel in the entire school population. This questionnaire was designed to address the following informational needs:

1. Background information
2. Perception of the Attendance Department
3. University Volunteer Program
(awareness/satisfaction)

Any interaction that existed between the perception of the Attendance Department and the university volunteer program would also be revealed.

Section one (Background Information) provided both overall and geographic information on how attendance is currently being handled in area schools. Questions in section two were directed at assessing the schools' per-

ceptions of the Attendance Department. The third section addressed issues related to the university volunteer program. Questions in this section determined the schools' awareness of the university volunteer program, the participating schools' perceptions of the program and the interest of the school community in pursuing this direction in the area of attendance. In summary, specific objectives one through five (p. 25) were determined by Questionnaire I.

A content analysis was used to summarize the qualitative data in the various sections. A summary of the results was mailed to all participating schools (Appendix G).

Questionnaire II (Appendix B) was distributed by university volunteers. There were 11 female and one male university volunteers participating in this part of the study. Twenty-five students referred to the program completed the questionnaires and returned it to the volunteer. The questionnaire was designed during the first year of the program when only senior elementary students met with university volunteers. Students in grades four through eight completed the questionnaire individually and returned it to the university volunteer assigned to their school. University volunteers read and paraphrased items on Questionnaire II to children in grade one to ensure they understood what was being asked. Some words were difficult for

the younger children to understand. For example, when asked if meetings were "convenient" eight of the 13 grade one participants made no response, three responded neutrally (i.e. neither convenient nor inconvenient) and one felt the meetings were "slightly convenient". In comparison, all of the children in grades four through eight responded and felt the meetings were "convenient". The questionnaire focused on the students' perception of the meetings with the university volunteer (Specific Objective 6, page 25). Questions also determined whether or not the children felt they would seek guidance if future problems arose.

A content analysis was performed on the qualitative questionnaire responses. The results were summarized and distributed to participating schools and attendance counsellors to assist with decision making the following year (Appendix H).

Questionnaire III (Appendix C) was distributed by the researcher to each attendance counsellor with a return stamped envelope. Questions in this survey were designed to determine the attendance counsellors' perceptions of the university volunteer program and their satisfaction with their role in the program. The results were summarized in a written report (Appendix I) and distributed only to members of the department. The report was discussed at a year end meeting focusing on future planning.

Results

Perceptions of the Researcher

Perception refers to insight or intuitive judgement. My perception of the three years that I worked with the Attendance Department would not be accurate without a brief description of the external variables exerting force at the same time I entered the setting.

As a whole the Attendance Department was not receiving positive feedback regarding their efforts to reduce nonattendance in the schools. The schools were requesting changes. Supervisors of the department rotated and were appointed from disciplines other than attendance forcing them to first learn about attendance and difficulties specific to this particular department before any modifications could be suggested. Finally the implementation of the Young Offenders Act during this time period forced attendance counsellors to actively seek a clear definition of their role and function within the Waterloo County Board of Education.

It was within this frame of reference that I began my field placement with the Attendance Department. In the first year of my association with the Attendance Department, I acted as a participant-observer. I was the

only university student working in the area of attendance. The attendance counsellors had tried working with university students in the past and found that it didn't work out, because the students took too much time to supervise. I'm not quite sure what I expected when I signed up to work with the Attendance Department, but I was surprised at what I found and what I didn't find.

I didn't find a satisfactory job description. I had a difficult time discerning what attendance counsellors actually did. I was given a mimeographed sheet of "General and Specific Responsibilities" which I found vague and all-encompassing. The idea of being responsible for promoting the educational and personal growth of young people with attendance problems was overwhelming. I didn't find a structured referral system with set criteria. There was a phone call here, a message there and the expectation of immediate action. In fact, I didn't find much respect paid to the Attendance Department. Meetings with children were conducted in the Guidance Counsellor's office (if they were lucky to find it vacant), in the nurse's office, in the cafeteria, in the staff room and several times in a very large closet. How much respect and authority can one command sitting amidst a row of coats and dripping umbrellas! Physical space has always been a problem but if attendance is a priority what I didn't find was annoying.

What I did find was unnerving. I found a very bitter group of professionals who appeared as lost as I was in the paper shuffle and the definition of terms. Their image as a department was at an all time low. They didn't sit on any of the special education service delivery "teams" that Board personnel had set up internally to ensure co-ordinated service delivery. The Attendance Department had had numerous supervisors over the years but never anyone from the area of attendance. I found little support and much apprehension at my presence in their midst. The fact that I was older than most university students, articulate and from the "university" led to numerous comments by the attendance counsellors about our comparative capability. I contended with remarks such as, "She will probably do a better job than us", as I tried to reassure them that I had a lot to learn. I also found many children with problems, but few of the kind that I had expected.

I met with a young man who had attended two out of 30 school days. His brother had drowned in the summer and he wanted to talk about death. No one would listen. Everyone told him to forget. He couldn't forget. We met weekly. He missed no more days and managed to pass two of his three credits. I needed support with this young man. It was frightening to realize that I was dealing with a real

live human being. He cried. He laughed, and after five months of "weekly talk sessions" he started to act like a wonderfully normal, smart-mouthed, chauvinistic, teenage boy. That young man was an attendance referral--correction: he was a write-off. His girl friend was the referral source. She had threatened suicide. I met him through her. Other referrals included children going to training school, children going to court and children playing X's and O's on their arms with broken glass. They were children with problems, some more severe than others, but all were troubled, few with school.

I finished that first year knowing that a large need existed. The need was a wide gaping hole in a system that was philosophically devoted to children and the betterment of society. The manpower was there in terms of undergraduate and graduate students like myself, but for some reason, the need and the resource were not connecting.

In the second year I approached the supervisor of the Attendance Department whom I had met several times in my first year and discussed the possibility of supervising several students in the same capacity that I had functioned the previous year. He was supportive of the idea. The attendance counsellor I had worked with in the first year suggested several potential schools which I visited I described what I had accomplished the previous year and

what I proposed for the coming year. I asked if they were interested in having a university student come to their school and meet with students who were having difficulty attending school. It was necessary to go in person, meet with the key informant in the area of attendance at each school and discuss all the pros, cons and possibilities for university students in their school. I tried not to be too restrictive in my role descriptions because I felt that a program was developing and all input and suggestions could help it take form. Finally, I presented the placement to the undergraduate Community Psychology class at the university. I described how I had functioned the previous year. I described the children I met and how I proposed to work with volunteers. There were eight university undergraduates who were interested in meeting with young people who were having problems attending school.

Simultaneously, at the Board of Education I became more visible to other members of the Attendance Department. I attended several department meetings and kept them informed of the university volunteers and their work in schools. In an attempt to record the number of children identified as habitually absent, the attendance counsellors had conducted a survey of all the schools they served. I collated and presented the data (Appendix J). The presentation of the data was well received until the breakdown

identified specific schools. Some counsellors became defensive arguing that their schools appeared to have more problems because they were more thorough in their data collection. The comments were justified. Not all five counsellors collected data personally. Some gave the forms to school personnel who may or may not have been as thorough as the counsellors. As a result the data may underestimate the magnitude of the problem. I learned not to present comparative data until the group involved was secure enough to examine themselves objectively.

Throughout the year I met on a regular weekly basis with the university volunteers. We discussed their placements, their expectations and their problems. The major problem was one of the role definition. The schools were not sure that they were correctly utilizing the services of the volunteers. To assist the schools and the volunteers with their understanding of the program, I had each volunteer summarize their activities at the schools. I collated all of the responses and distributed the summary to all volunteers, schools and each member of the Attendance Department.

At the end of this second year I took the original data collected by the attendance counsellors (Appendix J) and designed a followup study to examine whether or not curriculum changes in grade nine affected attendance pat-

terns. All five attendance counsellors assisted with the collection of data for this new study. The results indicated that the majority of non-attenders entered a general level program in high school and that poor attendance patterns established in elementary school continued into high school. The actual collection and presentation of research gave the Attendance Department some visibility within the board structure. The specifics of the study were less vital than the actual involvement of the attendance counsellors in research that was geared to examine and improve the practises and procedures of the Attendance Department.

At a final meeting with the university volunteers, I conducted a nominal group discussion (Delbecq & Van de Van, 1971) with six volunteers to determine ways the program could be improved. The volunteers suggested in order of priority:

1. Training in dealing with professionals
2. Consistent referral process
3. More definite role clarification to professionals
4. Clearer outline of role
5. General meeting with undergraduates and professionals

At the same time I was meeting individually with the key informants at the participating schools to determine what worked well and what did not work well from their

perception. All schools found space a problem. The high schools found a difficult time for the attendance program. The junior schools expected less of the volunteers in terms of "skills" than did the high schools. All schools were willing to participate another year but the high schools wanted the supervision of the volunteers to come from outside the school.

I met with the supervisor of the Attendance Department (supervisors had changed) and discussed my previous years' work and suggested that we start moving in the direction of further involvement with the attendance counsellors. He agreed. The attendance counsellors were becoming comfortable with my presence and my suggestions and they agreed to participate.

Gearing up for year three I organized an information package (Appendix D) incorporating data from the Attendance Department survey, from my own experiences and from the summary comments and experiences of volunteers. The package was distributed to participating schools, volunteers and each member of the Attendance Department.

In the third year of the program five attendance counsellors met as a group with 12 university volunteers at the Board of Education. There was a brief description of the program and how it had functioned to that point in time. Everyone introduced themselves. The attendance

counsellors stressed schools where they needed assistance and the university volunteers outlined areas they would like to experience. Counsellors and students then matched and went their separate ways to arrange appointment times at the various schools.

It was during this year that I was asked to present the volunteer attendance program to a group of guidance counsellors. The entire Attendance Department was invited and attended. Shortly thereafter I presented the results of my study examining curriculum and attendance to a committee at the Board working on school retention. Following this came a further request to present the same information to a group of high school counsellors. I was unable to attend this meeting and one of the attendance counsellors presented the results of the study. Each presentation made me more a part of the Attendance Department and made the department more visible within the Board.

During this year the attendance counsellors met individually with the volunteers and discussed areas of difficulty. Two additional volunteers were recruited at the beginning of the second semester to assist with the heavy demand. I met more frequently with the attendance counsellors than with the university volunteers and it was in this final year in which actual collection of information took place.

The results of Questionnaire I (Appendix E) completed by the schools resulted in quite a heated discussion. The counsellors became quite defensive and argued that the schools' perceptions of the department did not represent a true picture. It was pointed out that the questionnaire was divided into three sections and the counsellors agreed that they were focusing on only one section of the results.

It was after three years and this final collection of information that the utilization of university volunteers as support persons for students at risk for non-attendance became part of the Waterloo County Board of Education Attendance Department policy.

Questionnaire Data

The first objective was to find out how attendance was being handled in Waterloo County area schools.

Table 1
Attendance Plan or Program in Effect in the Schools

	Number of Schools	Percent
Home Contact	53	38
School Personnel/Student Contact	31	22
Attendance Department	31	22
Case Conference	12	9
Referral to Other Personnel	10	7
University Attendance Program	1	1
Total	139	100

Note. The response categories are not mutually exclusive.

The major finding was the diversity of approaches that were being followed in individual schools. Participating schools cited a variety of methods utilized in their plan or program. Parental/home contact cited by 38.2% of the schools was considered of highest priority in dealing with children who were experiencing difficulty attending school regularly. Whether schools contacted homes directly or liaised through the Attendance Department or another professional department depended largely on the school and the specific circumstances. It was

interesting to note that only 17% of the respondents felt that there was no attendance problem at their school. Whereas schools were varied in their approach to attendance programs, they were more consistent in their perception of monitoring responsibility.

Monitoring of attendance was considered an individual school responsibility.

Table 2
Person Responsible for Attendance Monitoring
in the Schools

	Number of Schools	Percent
Teacher	33	38
Staff	28	33
Parents	9	11
Other	11	12
No Response	5	6
<hr/>		
Total	86	100

Eighty-one of the schools (95%) responded to the question of monitoring responsibility with a large number feeling that the teacher (38%) or some other staff person (i.e., secretary, teacher, principal, or a combination) (33%) was responsible for monitoring attendance. Eleven comments could only be classified as "other" (e.g., monthly registers). Nine respondents felt the parents were responsible. For example, in schools which have adopted the Safe Arrival

Program, parents are responsible for calling the school before their child is absent. Parents of all unnotified absentees are contacted shortly after 9:00 am and 1:00 pm each day by telephone volunteers. This criterion for acting upon an absence was not consistent across schools.

The results indicate that there are no set criteria for acting on an attendance problem across schools.

Table 3
Area Schools' Criteria for Investigating Absence

	Number of Schools	Percent
3 Days or Less	19	22
Pattern	15	17
Teacher Concern	7	8
Safe Arrival Program	3	4
Other	24	28
No Response	18	21
<hr/>		
Total	86	100

Seventy-eight schools (78%) indicated their criteria for investigating absence. The responses from 24 schools (28%) had to be classified as "other". For example, "if a problem, act", "When I can't reach the home or don't get results", "reason and frequency" were cited as conditions. Nineteen schools (22%) had a set criterion of three day or less. Fifteen schools (17%) would act when a pattern

developed. Seven schools (8%) cited teacher concern and three (3%) based their actions on results from the Safe Arrival Program. The major finding in this section was the diversity of approaches that were followed in individual schools.

The second objective was concerned with the perception of the Attendance Department held by Waterloo County Board of Education schools. When asked about conditions or criteria at the school for referring a child to an attendance counsellor, the most frequently cited response was the inability of the school to remedy the problem.

Table 4
Area Schools' Criteria for Referring Children to the
Attendance Department

	Number of Schools	Percent
Resources Exhausted	38	44
Frequency of Absence	27	31
No Referral	12	14
No Response	9	11
<hr/>		
Total	86	100

Thirty-eight schools (44%) commented that they refer when their resources are exhausted or become ineffective.

Twenty-seven schools (31%) use frequency as the referral conditions and twelve (14%) felt the question was not

applicable because they don't refer children at all.

However, once a referral is made schools had definite expectations of the attendance counsellor's role.

Table 5
Role of the Attendance Counsellor as Perceived by
School Personnel

	Number of Schools	Percent
Resource to School	26	30
Last Resort	16	19
Work with Parent	12	14
Student Counselling	5	6
No Response	27	31
<hr/>		
Total	86	100

Fifty-nine (68.6%) of the respondents answered this question. Twenty-six schools (30%) expect attendance counsellors to act as a resource and work with the school in advising and dealing to act as a resource and work with the school in advising and dealing with poor attendance. Sixteen schools (19%) described the attendance counsellors expected role as one of following up "as a last resort". Twelve schools (14%) expect counsellors to "lay on guidelines" and work with parents, whereas five schools (6%) specifically cited individual counselling as the role of the attendance counsellor.

More than half of the schools surveyed felt that they did at some time utilize the services of the Attendance Department.

Table 6
Frequency Distribution of the Amount of Time Schools
Utilize the Services of the Attendance Department

	Number of Schools	Percent
Sometime	40	47
Not at all	20	23
Very Often	7	8
No Comment	4	5
No Response	15	17
<hr/>		
Total	86	100

Forty (47%) of the responding schools answered "sometime". Twenty (23%) felt that they did not use the Attendance Department at all. Seven (8%) used them "very often" and four (5%) did not comment.

No school felt that the attendance department was spending "too much" time at their school.

Table 7
Area Schools' Perception of the Amount of Time Spent at
Schools by Attendance Counsellors

	Number of Schools	Percent
Appropriate Amount	50	58
Sometime	6	7
No Comment	15	17
No Response	15	17
Total	86	100

Fifty schools (58%) felt that the department was spending an "appropriate amount of time" in the schools. Six respondents (7%) checked "sometime" and fifteen (17%) checked "no comment".

Schools took advantage of the "further comments" section to accentuate the lack of need for such a service at specific schools, praise the services of the department in other schools and note where areas of improvement were needed.

The third objective was to determine whether or not area schools were aware of the university volunteer program that was being supervised by the Attendance Department and the researcher.

A majority of the responding schools were not aware of the program. (Table 8)

Table 8
Schools' Awareness of the University Volunteer Program

	Number of Schools	Percent
Not Aware	47	55
Aware and/or Participating	19	22
No Response	20	23
<hr/>		
Total	86	100

Forty-seven (55%) of the responding schools were not aware of the university volunteer program. Nineteen (22%) were either aware or participating and the remaining schools did not respond to this section of questions. Of the 66 schools that responded, 44 (66.6%) requested a copy of the information package describing the university volunteer attendance program.

Only 64 schools continued beyond this point and indicated their interest in participating in the program.

Table 9
Schools' Interest in Future Participation in the
University Volunteer Attendance Program

	Number of Schools	Percent
Yes, Definitely	17	20
Possibly	9	10
If There Was a Need	19	22
No	20	23
No Response	22	25
Total	86	100

Seventeen schools (26%) indicated an interest in participating in the program in the future. Nine (14%) schools felt they "might" participate, nineteen (30%) indicated they would participate if there was a need at their school; and twenty (31%) felt they would not participate. In summary there were 45 potential schools for the program another year. Included in the number of potential schools were the 11 schools participating in the program that year. An examination of their responses by themselves addressed specific objective four and yielded very positive results favoring the continuation of the university volunteer program.

Table 10
Frequency Distribution of Participating Schools That
Want to Continue With the University Volunteer Program

	Number of Schools	Percent
Yes	10	91
Conditional	1	9
<hr/>		
Total	11	100

Ten (91%) of the eleven participating schools responded unconditionally that they would like to participate another year. One school felt that it was too early to make a decision.

The fifth specific objective was concerned with differences in perceptions between those schools participating in the university volunteer attendance program and those schools not participating in the program. As a group the 11 participating schools responded to comments regarding the Attendance Department more positively than non-participating schools. For example, 75% of the participating schools felt that the Attendance Department was spending an appropriate amount of time at their school compared to 55% of schools who were not participating. In terms of utilization, 91% of participating schools felt that they utilized the services of the attendance department "very often" or "sometime", whereas 69% of the non-

participating schools utilized their services "sometime" or "not at all". In term of usefulness, 50% of participating schools found the department "very useful" compared to 24% of the non-participating schools. However, a further 32% of the non-participating schools found the department "useful". The question of "usefulness" resulted in the largest "no comment" response. Thirty-three percent of participating schools and 39% of non-participating schools either checked "no comment" or left this question unanswered. While the response was more positive from participating schools, the sample size was small (11) when compared to the sample size of the non-participating group (75) and a larger sample size might alter the results.

The sixth objective was concerned with the perceptions of the university volunteer attendance program by participating students. It was found that 19 of the participating students (76%) would definitely want to be in the program again (Table 11).

Table 11
Frequency Distribution of Participating Students Who Want
To Continue With the University Volunteer Program

	Number of Students	Percent
Yes	19	76
No	--	--
Maybe	5	20
No Comment	1	4
Total	25	100

Five students felt they would consider participating another year (i.e. responded "maybe") and one grade one student did not comment.

When asked if they would be willing to meet with a different university volunteer the following year, the students again responded positively (Table 12).

Table 12
Frequency Distribution of Children Willing to Meet With a
Different University Volunteer

	Number of Students	Percent
Yes	13	52
No	1	4
Maybe	9	36
No Comment	2	8
Total	25	100

Thirteen students (52%) were definitely willing and nine (36%) would consider meeting with a different university volunteer. One grade four student checked "no" and two grade one students did not comment.

The children described the meetings as "helpful" (Table 13) and "enjoyable" (Table 14).

Table 13
Children's Perception of the Helpfulness of Meetings

	Number of Students	Percent
Extremely Unhelpful	--	--
Quite Unhelpful	--	--
Slightly Unhelpful	--	--
Neither Helpful Nor Unhelpful	3	12
Slightly Helpful	6	24
Quite Helpful	8	32
Extremely Helpful	8	32
<hr/>		
Total	25	100

Eighty-eight percent of the responding children felt the meetings were helpful with three choosing a non-committal category (i.e. neither helpful nor unhelpful). No child found the meetings not helpful and all 25 children responded.

An equal percentage of children (88%) who found the meetings helpful also found the meetings enjoyable (Table 14).

Table 14
Children's Perception of the Enjoyability of Meetings

	Number of Students	Percent
Extremely Unenjoyable	--	--
Quite Unenjoyable	--	--
Slightly Unenjoyable	--	--
Neither Enjoyable Nor Unenjoyable	1	4
Slightly Enjoyable	--	--
Quite Enjoyable	6	24
Extremely Enjoyable	16	64
No Comment	2	8
Total	25	100

One child chose the non-committal category and two did not comment. The remaining children (88%) found the meetings enjoyable. The vast majority of students both enjoyed the meetings and found them helpful.

When asked to choose a person with whom they would like to speak if problems arose in the future, five grade one students did not comment on any of the groups of people presented. The first grouping consisted of school personnel and non-school personnel (Table 15). Eight children chose more than one category.

Table 15

Group 1: Frequency Distribution of Children's Choice of Person To Assist With Problem-Solving From a Group Consisting of School Personnel and Non-School Personnel

	Number of Students	Percent
Friend	11	39
Parent	10	35
Guidance Counsellor	1	4
Principal	--	--
Teacher	1	4
No Response	25	18
Total	28	100

Note. The response categories are not mutually exclusive.

An unexpected finding in this section was the large number of children (74%) who chose non-school personnel as persons with whom they would prefer to speak regarding future problems.

In the second grouping, two children made more than one response. The option of the word "Friend" was removed from this group and the option of "university student" was added (Table 16).

Table 16

Group 2: Frequency Distribution of Children's Choice of Person to Assist With Problem-Solving From a Group Consisting of School Personnel, Non-School Personnel and University Students

	Number of Students	Percent
Parent	13	48
Principal	1	4
Teacher	1	4
University Student	7	26
Guidance Counsellor	--	--
No Response	5	18
Total	27	100

Note. The response categories are not mutually exclusive.

As in the first set of responses, a majority of children (74%) chose non-school personnel to approach for discussion of problems. It is also noteworthy that all seven "university student" choices came from grades four to seven. No grade one child chose a university student.

In the third set of groups, (Table 17), seven grade one students did not make a choice. The choice of the word "parent" was removed from this set.

Table 17

Group 3: Frequency Distribution of Children's Choice of Person Chosen for Assistance With Problem-Solving From a Group Consisting of School Personnel and University Students

	Number of Students	Percent
Principal	1	4
University Student	11	44
Teacher	5	20
Guidance Counsellor	1	4
No Response	7	28
Total	25	100

The most frequent choice (44%) remains the non-school personnel (i.e. university student). Four of the five grade one participants who did make a choice, chose "teacher" and one chose "university student".

There were 63 responses made in the three sets of groupings. Eleven of the 63 responses referred to school personnel (Table 18).

Table 18
Frequency Distribution of Children's Choice of School
Personnel Chosen for Problem Discussion

	Number of Students	Percent
Principal	2	18
Teacher	7	64
Guidance Counsellor	2	18
Total	11	100

Seven of those 11 responses identified the teacher as the primary choice for assistance. There was a low frequency response for "guidance counsellors" in this questionnaire. Additional "non-school personnel" responses were made to an open-ended question following the sets of groupings. For example, sisters, brothers, grandma's and neighbours were cited.

The seventh specific objective was concerned with the perceptions of the university volunteer attendance program by the attendance counsellors. All four of the respondents felt their role was to facilitate/advise and monitor the university volunteer attendance program. They saw their role as bringing the volunteer and school together as well as assisting with the internal match of students with volunteer. They felt "satisfied" with this role, commenting that they could choose their own level of participa-

tion. One additional comment was made that the program could function without the involvement of the Attendance Department.

When asked to comment on usefulness, three counsellors found the program "useful" and one found it "very useful". One counsellor could see the value in the program if it continued with some regularity. Another felt it allowed more one-on-one attention than the attendance counsellors could provide and further commented on its usefulness in prevention and early identification.

In terms of time commitment all respondents felt the program required "an appropriate amount of time", with one commenting that time was not the problem, the scheduling of time was. Another respondent elaborated that s/he was able to govern the amount of time given to the program by scheduling.

All respondents felt that the program had affected the image of the attendance counsellors. Comments ranged from the program being perceived as a positive move, to indicating that counsellors are interested in the preventative aspect of attendance and highlighting how thinly spread they are in terms of carrying out longterm support. One comment noted that the program makes principals and staff realize that truancy is but a symptom of many other problems. Another respondent felt that due to the stud-

ent's initial contact with the volunteer, their role as a last resort would appear to have more authority. This perception resulted from positive comments about the program received from principals, vice-principals, guidance counsellors, teachers etc. One principal commented that it was too bad that the program had to terminate at the end of March. There were positive comments from students who looked forward to continuing with the program. Feedback received from parents included a noted difference in their children. One negative response was received from a student who decided to opt out of the program. The attendance counsellor for that student noted that that particular student was also trying to opt out of anything that involved school.

When asked to comment on future directions of the program, attendance counsellors gave a wide range of responses. Comments ranged from expansion to improving student attitude toward education to an emphasis on junior grades (a preventative measure) to discontinuance (have schools work directly with the university).

Three respondents chose to comment further on the university volunteer program. One wondered if it could operate without the Attendance Department's involvement. The schools would work directly in co-ordinating the program with the university. Two counsellors elaborated

on the benefits both to the student and to the volunteer. For example, they commented how the students gained from individual attention and how the university volunteers gained from experience with young people.

Three of the four attendance counsellors who returned the questionnaire were interested in participating in the program another year. It was interesting to note that the respondent who was not interested in further participation was not involved in the referral process. This respondent felt the individual school should work with the university not with the Attendance Department. The three other respondents would be "disappointed" if it were discontinued. They felt the survey increased awareness and new schools would hopefully participate another year.

In summary, the university volunteer program was very well received. Ten of the 11 participating schools (91%) responded unconditionally that they would like to participate another year; 19 of the 25 participating students (76%) definitely wanted to participate another year; and three of the four responding attendance counsellors (75%) expressed interest in future participation.

Discussion

Summary

Over a three year period the researcher worked with the Attendance Department in developing and implementing an attendance program that utilized university volunteers as support persons for children identified as being at risk for attendance problems. The program implementation and subsequent data collection served to illustrate how Waterloo County Board of Education Schools function in the area of attendance at the individual school level. Questionnaire results indicated a conflicting perception of the Attendance Department but a positive response to the university volunteer attendance program. Some administrative concerns were identified. However, all three participating groups advocated the continuance of the university volunteer attendance program.

Benefits

Benefits to participating children far outweighed any possible concerns that attendance personnel may have had regarding the professional skill of university volunteers. The university volunteer attendance program provided school-age children with the opportunity to interact on a one-on-one basis and express their fears/feelings and/or

ideas about their own individual difficulties (i.e. fear of high school, university; problems adjusting to a new school, family, language etc.). In addition, the volunteers assisted the children in finding a possible solution/alternative to their problem (i.e. tutoring, exposure to high school, university, referral to professional assistance within the school board or to an external agency). The volunteers provided time and attention to participating children on an individual or small group basis. The benefits of individual attention had already been identified by 'resource withdrawal' teachers at various schools within the Waterloo system. The question was not whether children benefitted from individual attention. Schools, students and attendance counsellors all commented favourably about the one-to-one support program. The question was "could the Waterloo County Board of Education acquire enough human resources to meet the increasing needs of children requiring individual attention?"

Participating children had an opportunity to learn, talk and seek alternative solutions to their difficulties in a 'safe environment' where they were not susceptible to peer ridicule for any mistakes. Busch (1976) and Kohler (1976) both identified "underdeveloped reading and academic skills" as characteristics of both truants and dropouts. They found that nonattenders had a "lack of personally

satisfying experiences with other students or teachers" (Rogus, 1983, p. 72). Busch and Kohler further reported that truants had a negative attitude toward school and school personnel. The fact that children participating in the present study identified non-school personnel for discussion of future problems reinforces this finding.

Children may not perceive university volunteers as being affiliated with the school, which would work to their benefit. In addition it has been theorized that college/university students possess a "naive enthusiasm" (Poser, 1966) which may be effective when working with chronic populations. Target clients may perceive themselves as being closer in the social hierarchy to volunteers, especially "young" volunteers and therefore they may be more willing to identify with and model after the helper. There may be less stigma attached to seeing a volunteer than a Board "professional".

Finally, university volunteers had the time to see the same child every week for the entire school year if necessary. Weekly sessions were the norm rather than the exception. Children were able to suggest a solution or alternative to their dilemma, go out and try their idea, and return the following week to discuss their experience. The fact that 24 of the 25 participating students would consider participating again suggests that the students

felt they were benefitting from the experience.

Benefits to the schools included having the needs of many area children met in a very cost-efficient manner. A reduction of the responsibility and workload of key attendance personnel in the schools allowed them more time to deal with chronic offenders. Teachers gained assistance in instances where straight tutoring was required and there is the possibility of long-term gains of reduced absenteeism and behavioural difficulties.

An attendance counsellor supervising five university volunteers immediately increased his or her in-school time by 10 hours a week. Each volunteer was required to spend two hours per week in a placement setting. The children seen by the volunteers did not have to be seen by an attendance counsellor which left the counsellor free to work as a resource to the school (i.e. they either met with key attendance personnel in the schools and assisted them or met with the more chronic attendance problems). The fact that the volunteers were students from the university doing a field placement eliminated any cost factor and allowed school personnel the opportunity of developing their skills in supervision and resource-sharing.

Many students received straight tutoring or English lessons (e.g. the primary grades). Teachers correctly identified these youngsters as being potentially at risk

for attendance problems in the future if they did not "catch up" to their peers (Busch, 1976; Kohler, 1976). The fact that these children did get individual attention allowed the teacher to devote more time to teaching.

It is anticipated that the long-term result will be the reduction of absenteeism and/or dropout. Personal experience and volunteer reports indicated that students attended school more frequently when meeting with a volunteer. However, for several reasons, comparative data were not collected for this study.

First, the program was neither fully developed nor fully implemented and a summative evaluation may have yielded inaccurate results (Weiss, 1972). Negative results in the implementation stage may have led to the discontinuance of the program. Bry (1982) noted that the preventive affect of her attendance program did not occur until after two years of attending the program. She commented that an outcome evaluation at the end of the first year would have yielded negative results. It is evident that the participating schools appreciated the benefits they received from the university volunteer program. Ten of the 11 participating schools want to continue with the program.

Attendance counsellors also benefitted from their involvement with the program. In addition to receiving more manpower from the university volunteers, counsellors

also gained experience, were perceived more positively by participating schools and began to shift their role from one of 'truant officer' to one of 'change agent'.

Given the existing needs of Waterloo County Board of Education children and the existing number of attendance counsellors, it was impossible to fulfill the manpower need in the areas of attendance. One alternative approach to the manpower problem was the utilization of the non-professional or volunteer.

The use of volunteers in the helping professions is not a novel one. There are simply not enough trained professionals to deal with all the problems that arise. The use of volunteers in the area of truancy is not a novel one. Rodell (1979), Bauer et al. (1976), and Bry and George (1982) all used volunteers to work with children who had exhibited truant behaviour.

The management of volunteers in the attendance program offered the attendance counsellors the opportunity to develop their skill in the areas of supervision, co-ordination and administration. When the existing counsellors were hired, they were hired as truant officers. As the needs of children changed and increased over the years, their role moved in the direction of child advocate or social change agent. However, few counsellors had training in supervision, co-ordination or administration.

The increased manpower can lead to an expansion of the professional staff's understanding of client groups (Sobey, 1968). For example, university volunteers see many children who are "potentially" at risk for attendance problems. Attendance counsellors have such a heavy workload they must focus their attention on the most difficult situations. Forty-four percent of the responding schools only referred to the Attendance Department when their resources are exhausted, with 19% describing the role of an attendance counsellor as one of a "last resort". In 1976 Maslach "suggested that the cause of burnout in professionals was that they ... see clients only when clients are having problems" (Cherniss, 1980, p. 165). By interacting with volunteers, attendance counsellors have the opportunity to perceive a larger scope of the attendance problem. Cherniss (1980) points out the "groups in which the scope of the client contact was greatest, tended to be the ones in which stress and burnout were less severe" (p. 166).

A well-documented benefit of the university volunteer attendance program was illustrated in a comparison of responses made by schools participating in the program and schools not participating in the program. Participating schools responded to questions regarding the Attendance Department more favourably than non-participating schools.

Participating schools found that the Attendance Department spent an appropriate amount of time at their school. They found that the school utilized the services of the Attendance Department 'very often' and in general the schools found the department 'very useful.' As a group that had been trying very hard to favourably increase their image in schools, the Attendance Department was very successful in schools that had participated in the university volunteer program.

A discussion of benefits would not be complete without addressing the experience gained by university volunteers. Volunteers gain direct experience from working with children. They learned how complex the issue of attendance really is and how complex and enthusiastic children can be. They learned how to work with professionals, both attendance counsellors and school staff, and judging by the comments made during a nominal group discussion, this was an area in which undergraduates wanted to gain more experience. They felt inadequate in expressing their needs to professionals. Experience was also gained in the area of team or group work. In this rather ill-defined area of prevention, the volunteers needed the group discussion to confirm they were participating as required. The information package was developed out of their need to identify a frame of reference for their activities.

Participant Concerns/Reservations

Concerns of participating children were limited. They felt the meetings were too short and half of the children were uncertain about meeting with a different university volunteer another year.

Concerns of the schools were similarly limited. A few high schools were worried that the volunteers didn't possess the skill or training to meet with students. It was pointed out that the volunteers were neither consultants nor professionals. They volunteered their time to meet with children who were 'at risk' for attendance problems, not to meet with chronic truants. Their role was more of a friend or listener rather than advisor. Along the same line, the high schools felt they didn't have the time to train or supervise the volunteers. They were supportive of the program but wanted the supervision to come from outside the school. Semester change also posed a problem in the high schools. Students were unavailable to meet with volunteers for weeks at a time.

The only real concern from the elementary schools was the fact that university ended in April. They wanted to see the volunteers continue until June. In a majority of cases, volunteers did continue on their own time until June. However, there were a few who had employment commitments and were unable to continue.

Attendance counsellors expressed only administrative concerns. They found it time-consuming to co-ordinate and supervise the program continuing with their other activities. Counsellors wanted to see the program continue but would like to see the schools or university co-ordinate it. Their concern is a valid one. Attendance counsellors have no formal training in administration/co-ordination and to expect an administrator to emerge from their ranks without any monetary incentive or special time allotment would only lead to resentment. Bauer et al. (1976) found that it was difficult to maintain morale when staff were assigned additional tasks without monetary compensation.

Volunteers requested training in dealing with professionals and a consistent referral process. In several instances volunteers were asked to describe how children should be referred to the program. They wanted a more definite role clarification for professionals and a clearer outline of the role for themselves. Finally, they suggested a general meeting at the beginning of the year between the volunteers and the professionals.

In the third year of the program, volunteers met as a group with the attendance counsellors. In September, 1986 volunteers will meet as a group with attendance counsellors and key informants from interested schools. A slide presentation outlining the role of the volunteer will be

presented with a discussion to follow.

Researcher Concerns/Recommendations

As an intervention the university volunteer attendance program is effective. However, efficacy is not enough to produce change. Intervention programs must also be acceptable within the environmental context in which they are intended to function.

The environmental context of the school represents a complicated, "everchanging social setting" (Sarason, 1982, p. 28) and an intervention that proves effective and appropriate at a given point in time may prove ineffective and inappropriate at some future point in this continuing educational evolution. Any proposed intervention within a school setting must have a process component built in that allows for change and modification determined by the ever-changing needs of the school setting.

In the school culture "supervision rarely means observing and working with" (Sarason, 1982, p. 43) those being supervised. To be effective and to have a beneficial experience in the area of attendance university volunteers must interact with key attendance personnel (i.e. attendance counsellors). Attendance counsellors have had no supervisory experience. In fact, no one has taken into consideration that attendance counsellors had to unlearn what they had originally learned as 'truant officers' before they

could move in the direction of child advocate and social change agent. The added responsibility of supervising volunteers will take time to fully develop and be appreciated as a means to increase human resources.

Interventions within the school setting are mandated down from the administrative level to the individual school level. The assumption being that if the intervention is beneficial, it is desired by all within the Board jurisdiction. That is not necessarily accurate. For example, in the case of attendance, some ethnic schools (i.e. Mennonite) and some schools that are fully bussed do not experience problems with attendance. For these schools, compulsory participation in a program that is not necessary could only lead to resentment on the part of the school and disillusionment on the part of the volunteer who has no student to meet with. It is acceptable for interventions to be functioning in some schools and not in others as long as all schools have an equal opportunity to participate if they wish.

Another concern aptly expressed by Sarason (1982) is that "as long as the benefit remains undefined or defined in a way that defies testability, we indulge our good intentions at the expense of clarity" (p. 28). There must be a time-limit or conditions set for development in order that we may accurately assess whether or not the utiliza-

tion of university volunteers with students at risk for nonattendance actually reduces nonattendance. As previously mentioned students may have to participate for more than one year and this may be one of the developmental criteria.

As a second criterion it is recommended that a clearly defined position of volunteer co-ordinator be created (Appendix K) either on a part-time basis for this particular program or a full-time basis to co-ordinate all volunteer programs within the board.

The more new people who flood a school, the more questions school personnel will have about role relationship, role functions, and so on ... The greater the number of outsiders who do not know the school, the more time they have to spend in learning, and during this time the amount of help they can give is small.

(Sarason, 1982, p. 215)

It should be noted that the researcher's concerns identified in this study are specific but not exclusive to school settings. The demonstration of efficacy does not necessarily lead to change (Fairweather, 1969). More research is warranted describing both the environmental culture and the change process in various human service settings.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire I



**The Waterloo County
Board of Education**

Education Centre
51 Ardelt Avenue
Box 68
Kitchener, Ontario
N2G 3X5

(519) 742-1751
Cambridge (GALT)
ZEnith 91630

February 29, 1985

MEMO TO: Principals

FROM: William D. Martin
Assistant to Superintendent
Special Education Services.

RE: Attendance Counselling Services

The attached survey is designed to invite feedback from schools on the attendance counselling services and the impact of the university volunteer students placed through the attendance department.

Principals are requested to submit one response for their respective schools. It is assumed that the survey will be complete by the person(s) most directly involved with the management of attendance within the school.

Please submit the completed survey form to:

William D. Martin
Assistant to the Superintendent
Special Education Services
Building #1, Education Center
51 Ardelt Avenue
Kitchener, Ontario.

by March 27, 1985

G. J. Beckenhauer
Superintendent
Special Education Services.

WDM/1h

ATTENDANCE SURVEY

SCHOOL _____

KEY INFORMANT: _____

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

(1) a) Do you have a definite plan or program for children who have difficulty attending school regularly? _____

b) Please describe if yes in (a): _____

(2) Describe your role in attendance at this school _____

(3) What is your title in the area of attendance at this school? _____

(4) How is attendance monitored at this school? _____

(5) What are the conditions at this school before you act on an attendance problem? _____

(6) What further comments have you on how attendance is handled in this school? _____

II. PERCEPTION OF THE WCBE ATTENDANCE DEPARTMENT:

- (1) What are the conditions at this school for referring a child to an attendance counsellor?

- (2) Would you please describe the role expected of the attendance counsellor at this school?

- (3) How would you rate the quantity of time allotted for your school by the attendance department? (Please check the most appropriate statement)

- i) too much _____
ii) sometimes _____
iii) an appropriate amount of time _____
iv) no comment _____

- (4) How often do you utilize the services of the attendance department?

- i) very often _____
ii) sometimes _____
iii) not at all _____
iv) no comment _____

- (5) How do you think the services are being performed in terms of usefulness?

- i) very useful _____
ii) useful _____
iii) not at all useful _____
iv) no comment _____

- (6) What further comments have you on the functioning of the attendance department?

III. UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM AWARENESS:

- (1) Are you aware/participating in the WCBE attendance program utilizing university volunteers for one-to-one support for children identified as high risk for attendance problems?

(2) Where did you hear about the program?

(3) Is there any particular reason why you are not participating in the program?

- _____
- (4) (a) Would you be interested in receiving an information package describing the program?

Yes _____

No _____

- (b) Would you be interested in participating next year?

Yes _____

No _____

- (5) IF PARTICIPATING:

How does the program function in your school? (LOGISTICS)

(Please check all applicable statements)

- university student more or less on own _____
- university student talks with you _____
- university student works with teacher _____
- university student works with attendance counsellor _____
- other (elaborate) _____

- (6) Has your school made any special arrangements to accommodate the program? (i.e. provide room, phone, support)?

IV - UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEER PROGRAM USEFULNESS:

(1) How do you think the program is functioning in terms of usefulness?

- i) very useful _____
- ii) useful _____
- iii) not at all useful _____
- iv) no comment _____

Other Comments _____

(2) How much time does the program require of school personnel?

- i) too much time _____
- ii) too little time (staff would like to be more involved) _____
- iii) an appropriate amount of time _____
- iv) no comment _____

Other Comments _____

(3) Have you received any comments from staff about the program?

- i) positive (please elaborate) _____
- ii) no comment (please elaborate) _____
- iii) no comments received _____

Other Comments _____

(a) Have you received any comments from parents/students about the program?

- i) positive (please elaborate) _____
- ii) negative (please elaborate) _____
- iii) no comments received _____

(4) How are referrals decided upon in your school?

(5) Are you interested in participating in the program next year?

- i) yes (Please Comment) _____
- ii) no (Please Comment) _____

(6) What further comments/criticism or recommendations have you about the University volunteer program?

Appendix B

Questionnaire II

Dear Student,

Thank you for meeting with a student from the university. In order to make plans for next year, it would be helpful to learn what you think about your meetings. The university students and school staff will not see individual results. Please fill out the questionnaire, seal it in the envelope provided and return it to the university student. Thank you for helping us.

1) Grade _____ Boy _____ Girl _____

2) How would you describe the meetings? Please check one square for each line.

Extremely Quite Slightly Neither one nor Slightly Quite Extremely
the other

too long

very convenient

very helpful

very enjoyable

3) Did you ever prefer to stay in class when called for a meeting?

1. Yes _____

2. No _____

4) If this program were to continue next year would you like to participate?

1. Yes _____ 2. No _____ 3. Maybe _____

5) What is the most important reason for your answer to question 3 ?

6) How do you feel about meeting with a different university student next year?

1. Yes _____ 2. No _____ 3. Maybe _____

7) The thing that most impressed me about the meeting was:

8) I was somewhat disappointed that:

9) I believe that the two most helpful things that could improve the meetings are:

1.

2.

10) If you had a problem in the future and the following group of people were available who would you choose to speak with? (Please check one)

- 1. Friend.....

- 2. Parent.....

- 3. Guidance Counsellor.....

- 4. Principal.....

- 5. Teacher.....

11) Who would you choose from the following group of people?

- 1. Parent.....

- 2. Principal.....

- 3. Teacher.....

- 4. University Student..

- 5. Guidance Counsellor.....

12) Who would you choose from the following group of people?

- 1. Principal.....

- 2. University Student..

- 3. Teacher.....

- 4. Guidance Counsellor.....

13) Is there anyone else you would choose to speak with?

14) Other comments about the meetings?

Appendix C

Questionnaire III

ATTENDANCE DEPARTMENT SURVEY - - JUNE, 1985

(1) What do you perceive is your role in the volunteer attendance program?

(2) How satisfied are you with your role in the program? Please circle the most appropriate response.

- a) very satisfied
- b) satisfied
- c) not satisfied
- d) no comment

Other Comments _____

(3) How do you think the program is functioning in terms of usefulness?

- a) very useful
- b) useful
- c) not at all useful
- d) no comment

Other Comments _____

(4) How much of your time does the program require?

- a) too much time
- b) too little time
- c) an appropriate amount of time
- d) no comment

Other Comments _____

A. How many volunteers do you supervise? _____

(5) Do you feel this program has affected the image of attendance counsellors?

- a) Yes _____ (Please elaborate)
- b) No _____ (Please elaborate)

(6) Have you received any comments from staff (Principals, vice-principals, guidance counsellors, teachers, consultants, administrators) about the program?

a) Positive_____ (Please elaborate)

b) Negative_____ (Please elaborate)

c) No comment_____

(7) Have you received any comments from parents/students about the program?

a) Positive_____ (Please elaborate)

b) Negative_____ (Please elaborate)

c) No comment_____

(8) Are you involved in the referral process?

a) Yes_____ (Please describe your involvement)

b) No_____

(9) Are you interested in participating in the program next year?

a) Yes_____ (Please comment)

b) No _____ (Please comment)

(10) In what direction do you see (or would you like to see) the program developing?

(11) What further comments/criticisms or recommendations have you about the university volunteer program?

Appendix D

Information Package

INFORMATION PACKAGE:
SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROGRAM
1984/85

Table of Contents

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PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

The ideology of the school attendance program is to provide one-to-one support for children who are considered 'at risk' for excessive non-excused absence in an attempt to intervene before nonattendance becomes an issue. An attendance problem is defined as a child who has been absent without cause for more than twenty (20) days in one school year. Children identified 'at risk' for attendance problems include children who have exhibited nonattendance patterns in the past, siblings of children who are currently being followed or who have been followed in the past by an attendance counsellor, and children who have been identified 'at risk' by either the school based team (SBT) or key attendance personnel within a particular school. The philosophy behind the service is to provide support within a school environment not contingent upon school related difficulties or behaviours.

The basic assumption of this philosophy is that nonattendance is a symptom of a variety of difficulties, few of which may be related to school. For example, the children may be experiencing a family break-up, problems with friends, a period of low self-esteem, difficulty in adjusting to a new school environment (students in transition as well as transfer students) and/or anxiety about specific subject areas or future directions. A second assumption is that children designated 'at risk' for attendance problems will not seek out assistance by their own volition. The final assumption is that if not assisted, nonattenders may eventually become a 'drop-out' statistic.

The attendance program attempts to provide school-age children with an opportunity to interact with an undergraduate on a one-to-one basis and express their fears/feelings and/or ideas about their own individualized difficulty (ie. fears re: highschool, university; problems adjusting to a new school, family, etc.), as well as assist in the possible resolution of their problem (ie. tutoring, exposure to highschool, university, referral to professional assistance within the schoolboard or external agency).

GOALS FOR VOLUNTEERS

Given the philosophy of the Undergraduate Attendance Program, the goals can be stated as:

- 1) To provide a one-to-one support person for each child referred to the program as being 'at risk' for developing problems either resulting from nonattendance or possibly leading to nonattendance and/or drop-out.
- 2) To assist students referred to the program in both verbalizing and problem-solving around their individualized area of concern.
- 3) To provide information of educational options, available resource persons and/or noneducational helping agencies.
- 4) To increase the likelihood that students will seek guidance on their own initiative when future questions and/or difficulties arise.
- 5) To decrease the number of nonexcused absences in schools in which the program is functioning.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Individual schools maintain their own records in a variety of ways. As a result it is difficult to estimate the number of potential students for this program.

According to data collected by Waterloo area Attendance Counsellors in June, 1983, identifying 'habitually absent students' there were 559 'potential' or 'active' attendance problems. Frequency data based on these statistics is presented in Table 1. The survey was conducted only in elementary schools and it is estimated that the figure could be doubled if highschool nonattenders were included. Therefore at least 1000 children are potential candidates for the undergraduate attendance program. This is probably an underestimation due to the fact that the survey was not undertaken for the purpose of compiling statistics. It was approached as an individual exercise of each attendance

counsellor to assist in identifying potential attendance problems in their area. Therefore, the manner of data collection varied among counsellors.

As noted in Table 1, the need in the elementary setting increases in grades seven (7) and eight (8). Five Attendance Counsellors service the entire Waterloo Board of Education with a total population of 48,746 students (Total enrollment as of June 30th, 1983).

No comparison data is available on whether or not nonattendance is increasing. However, it is the general consensus of key informants that the problem has increased in magnitude and that schools are only referring chronic truants and extreme nonattenders to Attendance Counsellors or they are not using their services at all. In addition, given the magnitude of the problem and the current available resources, students are only followed until their sixteenth (16) birthday.

The statistics and facts indicate four (4) areas of need:

- 1) increased manpower in the area of attendance
- 2) an alternate approach to increase earlier referral
- 3) an alternate approach to decrease nonattendance
- 4) some support for students over sixteen (16) years of age.

Table 1
Frequency Distribution by Grade of
Habitually Absent Students for the
1982-83 School Year

Grade	# of students
K	31
1	20
2	16
3	20
4	25
5	38
6	55
7	161
8	158
Special Ed	19
Total	543

In the 1983-84 school year 8 university students, 17 senior elementary students and 10 high school students participated in the program. Students who participated ranged in grade level from 7 to 13. A summary report describing students involved in the 1983-84 program is presented in Appendix A.

REFERRAL PROCESS

There was no consistency of referral to the attendance program last year. Some Undergraduates were paired with either a Counsellor (Guidance) or Basic Teachers who referred students to them. In two other schools the vice-principal or guidance counsellor made the referral. In one school referrals were decided upon in September by SBT (School Based Team) with the area Attendance Counsellor present. This year referrals will be decided upon by SBT and/or Attendance Counsellors.

THEORY LINKING ACTIVITIES AND GOALS

The theory linking program activities and goals is that the opportunity of experiencing some one-to-one contact with an undergraduate, for students designated at risk for attendance problems and/or drop-out will:

- 1) more readily enable students to examine out-of-school difficulties as well as in-school difficulties than if meeting with school personnel who by virtue of role definition may be perceived as influencing marks and/or records.
- 2) provide a supportive environment in which students can explore a variety of problem-solving methods.
- 3) provide information about further education, courses, in-school and out-of school resource persons.
- 4) encourage students to seek out assistance when necessary.
- 5) inspire behaviour conducive to positive feedback from the undergraduate (ie. increased attendance, good work habits).

Accordingly, when a student enters the program he/she meets with an undergraduate with limited restrictions for confidentiality (undergraduate may break confidence if student appears in danger or threatening to run). The number of meetings vary from one to weekly depending on the nature of the referral. The environment is nonthreatening and the student is encouraged to examine a variety of possible courses of action. When applicable, students are provided with information about highschool, university and/or available resource persons. Students are encouraged to seek out assistance when needed and praised for regular attendance and good work habits.

FLOW CHART OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROGRAM

Attendance Department and
Program Co-ordinator (C. Gibson)

Board of Education

RESOURCES

RESOURCES

University volunteers

Schools

IN SCHOOL PROGRAM

- MONITORING
- INFORMATION
- SUPPORT
- GUIDANCE IN
VERBALIZING DIFFICULTIES

ACTIVITIES

- INSIGHT INTO DIFFICULTIES
- INCREASED PROBLEM
SOLVING SKILLS
- INCREASED AWARENESS
OF OPTIONS
- ASSISTANCE SEEKING
BEHAVIOUR

Short Term

IMPACT

- INCREASED ATTENDANCE

Long Term

MAJOR SERVICE ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAM COMPONENTS

The major component of the school attendance program is direct service to referred students.

INSCHOOL PROGRAM:

- initial interview: introduction to undergraduate; program explanation; assessment of student's willingness to participate.
- if positive response parental consent form must be completed (Appendix B).
- interview to establish student's area of difficulty (home, school, lack of information) and set up appointment times (may only be one or two informational meetings or ongoing weekly meetings).
- confirmation with key informants (teacher, V.P., attendance counsellor) re: ambiguous background information.
- weekly meetings: support and encouragement to examine difficulties and a variety of alternative actions; active listening; role playing
- tutoring if applicable
- referral to other resources if applicable
- possible inclusion of parent

Volunteers are undergraduate university students who are currently enrolled in a Community Psychology Course. In order to fulfill course requirements, volunteers must spend a minimum of two hours per week in placement activities. Placement activities include meeting with:

- i) children
- ii) school personnel
- iii) Attendance Counsellors
- iv) Program Co-ordinator (C. Gibson)

Appendix A
A Summary Report of Students
Involved in the 1983-84 Attendance Program

New programs are always difficult especially when they are geared to evolving rather than being directed and instituted by means of a specific model. This report is an attempt to assist those involved in the attendance program in appreciating the contact that is currently in progress in various Waterloo schools. It is hoped that through this brief presentation, both professionals and nonprofessionals will gain further insight which will aid in the development of a program aimed at reducing non attendance and eventually drop-out.

To date eight (8) undergraduate students have met on a one-to-one basis with eighteen (18) elementary and nine (9) secondary school students. One undergraduate is working in a classroom situation. As outlined in the permission letter, the goal of the program is the prevention of nonattendance.

To elucidate on specific referrals case studies are presented as described by the undergraduates presently involved in the program. Many of the comments are subjective relating how the pupils perceives the situation in which they find themselves. The importance of this perspective can not be underestimated. How a problem is perceived will determine how it is defined and ultimately what steps are taken to ensure its resolution.

BOY Grade 7: This boy has family difficulties more than anything else. He lives with his father, step-mother and two (2) step-brothers. He feels left out and not treated fairly. He is experiencing conflict with his step-mother. Although his attendance is regular and consistent he has problems with his academic work.

Together with the undergraduate, the boy is attempting to talk through some of the feelings he is experiencing in his relationship with his step-mother and family. He is trying to realize ways the various conflicts could be lessened. He seems to have a great need to have someone listen to the things he has to say. The undergraduate is hoping to have him start a journal so that when he experiences such feelings he can put them down on paper and work through them in that way.

GIRL Grade 7: Described as having "fallen in with the wrong crowd", this student is always willing to skip school if the opportunity arises. In the past she has accepted stolen money and been found loitering around factories during the lunch hour. As she is relatively new to the program the student and the undergraduate are still getting to know one another by talking about different aspects of the student's life (ie. How's school? How are you getting along at home?).

BOY Grade 8 Rather than an attendance problem, this student has problems getting to school on time. He is constantly late. His father is on a disability pension and his mother babysits. His father is a fanatic about sports and allows the boy to stay up late and watch sports on TV. He likes to socialize at school but doesn't like schoolwork.

BOY Grade 7: This student meets weekly with the undergraduate and is described as "enjoys talking" and "hyperactive" (takes medication). He is very defensive when discussing his parents. The father was an alcoholic but is described by the boy as reformed. The student is unable to maintain eye contact but has a good attitude toward school and wants to do well. However, he is unable to keep his work up and is in two (2) remedial classes. He enjoys talking with the undergraduate who feels that his stories may be exaggerated by basically true.

GIRL Grade 8: A grade eight student who was an attendance problem last year but is doing much better at the present time. She lives with her grandmother and her grandmother's second husband. Her natural mother lives in London and doesn't seem to visit often. The student gets along well with her grandmother but not with her step-grandfather. Part of her attendance problems last year resulted from babysitting for an aunt. The girl is described as "enjoying the weekly talk sessions" and the undergraduate feels she is developing a more trusting relationship with the student.

BOY Grade 7: A big attendance problem last year this student is being closely monitored. His sister who was at the same school last year seems to have been an influential factor in his nonattendance. He is currently on probation for shoplifting. His attitude and attendance have both improved and he seems to be trying more in his schoolwork. He meets weekly with the undergraduate who has spoken with his teacher who feels he has the potential but isn't trying hard enough. The boy's mother doesn't give the impression of being interested in the boy's schoolwork but the father is quite helpful and will be contacted at work.

BOY Grade 8: A previous attendance problem who missed school at the beginning of the current year as well. He has only entered the program as he took a while to bring in his permission slip. To date he has only answered the undergraduates questions and may take a while to develop a trusting relationship.

GIRL Grade 8: This student is new to the school and had attendance problems last year. She seems to have medical problems which have not been diagnosed to date. She lives with her parents (may be step-father) and is attending well this year.

GIRL Grade 8: Illness is a major factor in this girl's nonattendance. The mother is described as being 'overprotective' and keeping the girl home at the slightest sign of ill

health. The girl has a good attitude toward school and does try to keep up with her homework but she misses so much school that it's difficult for her. She has concerns that her marks will not be high enough for a level 5 program in high school but if she works hard next term she should be all right. There also seems to be some problems at home. The father doesn't live at home and no mention is made of him. The mother seems to be experiencing some difficulty as the student has been staying with her aunt for the last while.

In addition to meeting weekly and discussing the student's situation, the undergraduate has spoken with the teacher to confirm that she is trying and offered to assist the girl with her homework.

GIRL Grade 8: Another previous attendance problem who has improved in attendance but not in motivation. Her marks are average. There is some friction at home with her parents wanting her to participate in family outings which she seems to dislike. She mentioned seeing a doctor for nerves and seems to hold her problems inside.

This student meets weekly with an undergraduate and appears open. She seems to enjoy talking things out.

BOY Grade 8: This boy has been described as 'having brains' but not applying them to his school work.. He says he sees school as important yet his behaviour doesn't indicate this. For example, he is habitually late for school because his game at the arcade was going well or he stopped to gather shopping carts for Zehrs. He needs work in the area of social skills (frequently the butt of class jokes). His parents see work as more important than school and consequently offer him little support. He demonstrates a need for some one-to-one attention where his ideas and feelings can be heard.

Short term goals include not being late for two weeks of school and doing homework at least twice a week. The student is working with the undergraduate to improve social skills (ie. talking about possible consequences of our actions on others) with hopes of working in some role-playing.

BOY Grade 8: A new boy to the school, this student hasn't presented any major problems but has been identified as a potential risk in view of his family situation. His sister quit school, was arrested and kicked out of the house.

The student is talking with the undergraduate about ways of adjusting to a new school, effective problem solving methods and his feelings about his sister and his home life.

Four students seen by one undergraduate are described as experiencing similar problems: family break-ups, problems with friends, low self esteem, difficulties in adjusting to a new school and/or anxiety about specific subject areas. For these students attendance at present isn't the major problem. They are basically children who could benefit from some one-to-one contact, having someone show they care and show them that they are important enough to have their ideas and feelings heard. They need support and they need a friend.

GIRL Grade 8: This student appeared very anxious to be involved in the program and returned her permission slip the following day. She lives with her mother and her mother's boyfriend, while her father lives nearby. There is a lot of physical fighting between mother's boyfriend, mother and father. The student has missed a lot of school due to unexplained high temperatures. She is quite willing to talk about her family situation.

The undergraduate reacts more by listening than anything else but has confirmed background with the school's Vice-principal. The mother of the student has expressed a desire to meet with the undergraduate and available times have been referred to her.

2 GIRLS

Highschool: One undergraduate has been assigned to two (2) girls in a secondary school. The role is that of a support person. She checks their attendance each week, discusses any difficulties they may be experiencing and assists with any tutoring requests.

In addition to meeting weekly with the students the undergraduate has gained further insight into the difficulties the girls are experiencing by meeting with the Principal, Head of Basic Program, teachers and attendance office staff.

GIRL Grade 9: This student had attendance problems in Junior High. She missed school when she suffered migraines, an affliction she has had from childhood. Her Junior High School teachers, unlike her elementary teachers did not take her complaint seriously but rather saw it as an excuse. By the time her parents had approached her teachers and explained that the headaches weren't contrived, the student had decided that she hated school and didn't care about her marks.

The undergraduate's purpose was to monitor the students attendance and serve as a source of support.

Some one short term meetings proved helpful to three (3) secondary students meeting with an undergraduate.

The first student was a female currently completing grade thirteen (13). Her problem stemmed from extreme anxiety over the rigors of university academics. "Myths" put forth by some teachers had frightened her to the point of considering cutting short her education. Her fears were alleviated by a more realistic portrayal of university life. The student seemed less apprehensive at the end of the discussion and did not require a further meeting.

Another grade thirteen (13) female student was seeking guidance about university life, for example, school work and living accommodation. A variety of issues were bothering her including her work standards at school (ie. marks). She felt insecure about her marks and her educational background. She did not feel prepared to enter into a music program although she very much wanted to get her degree in music. The undergraduate contacted people in the WLU music department and arranged for the student to meet with a music undergraduate who will allow her to experience some classes at the university. Hopefully, this exposure will alleviate some anxiety and inform the student of scholastic areas in need of more work.

A third short term session entailed a strictly informational meeting. Types of courses necessary to enter into a counselling profession were discussed.

GIRL Grade 10: At the time of referral this student was not an attendance problem. She was depressed and her grades were suffering. Her parents had recently separated, she had just recovered from a bout of mononucleosis and she had been overinvolved in extra curricular activities. The role of the undergraduate is that of a friend, someone the student can talk with.

The sole male secondary student in the program is receiving straight tutorial service. The undergraduate works with him on English and family studies. All his work is done orally and it is necessary to read his course material in advance. The student is also assisted in test preparation.

Clearly, undergraduates are assisting in many areas and with a wide range of difficulties. Only one female secondary student referred to the program did not attend scheduled meetings and was dropped from the program.

As previously mentioned the purpose of this years involvement has been to assist in the development of a program aimed at the preven-

tion of attendance problems, therefore your assistance in the form of advice and/or constructive criticism will be greatly appreciated when I contact you in the near future.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Gibson

Charlotte Gibson

Appendix B
Information Letter and Consent Form

1984-85

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In the past school attendance has been handled by each individual school with serious cases being referred to a school Attendance Counsellor. The present program recognizes that by the time attendance becomes a problem it is often too difficult to convince the child that nonattendance is not a productive solution. In our program university students encourage the discussion of problems with children before attendance becomes an additional problem. The university students in the program will be supervised by Waterloo Board of Education Attendance Counsellors and a program co-ordinator (Ms. Charlotte Gibson).

Students who agree to participate and who have been given signed parental consent will meet regularly with a university student. The meetings may take the form of:

- i) discussion
- ii) extra help in a specific subject area
- iii) assistance in adjusting to a new school environment
- iv) assistance in locating facilities in the community

Students will be called by the university student they are meeting with if they fail to keep a designated appointment. Students may withdraw from the program at any time. Any requests for further assistance beyond the one-to-one sessions will be referred to a school professional.

Later in the year, your child will be asked to complete a short questionnaire describing the usefulness of these meetings. This information will allow us to continually improve the program. The university students and school personnel will not see individual results but will receive a summary of the questionnaire results.

This program is currently in its second year of operation and has been approved by the Waterloo Board of Education and this school. The final decision for participation is up to you. Please return the attached form in either case. Thank-you for considering the program.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Gibson (Program Co-ordinator)

1984-85

I have agreed to have my child participate in the program supervised by the Waterloo Board of Education Attendance Department and Ms. Charlotte Gibson.

YES _____

NO _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____

Name of Child _____

Child's Date of Birth _____

Appendix C
Evaluation Questionnaire

Dear Student,

Thank you for meeting with a student from the university. In order to make plans for next year, it would be helpful to learn what you think about your meetings. The university students and school staff will not see individual results. Please fill out the questionnaire, seal it in the envelope provided and return it to the university student. Thank you for helping us.

1) Grade _____ Boy _____ Girl _____

2) How would you describe the meetings? Please check one square for each line.

Extremely Quite Slightly Neither one nor Slightly Quite Extremely
the other

too long							
very convenient							
very helpful							
very enjoyable							

3) Did you ever prefer to stay in class when called for a meeting?

1. Yes _____

2. No _____

4) If this program were to continue next year would you like to participate?

1. Yes _____ 2. No _____ 3. Maybe _____

5) What is the most important reason for your answer to question 3 ?

6) How do you feel about meeting with a different university student next year?

1. Yes _____ 2. No _____ 3. Maybe _____

7) The thing that most impressed me about the meeting was:

8) I was somewhat disappointed that:

9) I believe that the two most helpful things that could improve the meetings are:

1. _____
2. _____

10) If you had a problem in the future and the following group of people were available who would you choose to speak with? (Please check one)

1. Friend....._____
2. Parent....._____
3. Guidance Counsellor._____
4. Principal....._____
5. Teacher....._____

11) Who would you choose from the following group of people?

1. Parent....._____
2. Principal....._____
3. Teacher....._____
4. University Student.._____
5. Guidance Counsellor._____

12) Who would you choose from the following group of people?

1. Principal....._____
2. University Student.._____
3. Teacher....._____
4. Guidance Counsellor._____

13) Is there anyone else you would choose to speak with?

14) Other comments about the meetings?

Appendix E

Parental Consent Form

1984-85

Dear Parent or Guardian:

In the past school attendance has been handled by each individual school with serious cases being referred to a school Attendance Counsellor. The present program recognizes that by the time attendance becomes a problem it is often too difficult to convince the child that nonattendance is not a productive solution. In our program university students encourage the discussion of problems with children before attendance becomes an additional problem. The university students in the program will be supervised by Waterloo Board of Education Attendance Counsellors and a program co-ordinator (Ms. Charlotte Gibson).

Students who agree to participate and who have been given signed parental consent will meet regularly with a university student. The meetings may take the form of:

- i) discussion
- ii) extra help in a specific subject area
- iii) assistance in adjusting to a new school environment
- iv) assistance in locating facilities in the community

Students will be called by the university student they are meeting with if they fail to keep a designated appointment. Students may withdraw from the program at any time. Any requests for further assistance beyond the one-to-one sessions will be referred to a school professional.

Later in the year, your child will be asked to complete a short questionnaire describing the usefulness of these meetings. This information will allow us to continually improve the program. The university students and school personnel will not see individual results but will receive a summary of the questionnaire results.

This program is currently in its second year of operation and has been approved by the Waterloo Board of Education and this school. The final decision for participation is up to you. Please return the attached form in either case. Thank-you for considering the program.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Gibson (Program Co-ordinator)

1984-85

I have agreed to have my child participate in the program supervised by the Waterloo Board of Education Attendance Department and Ms. Charlotte Gibson.

YES _____

NO _____

Parent or Guardian Signature _____

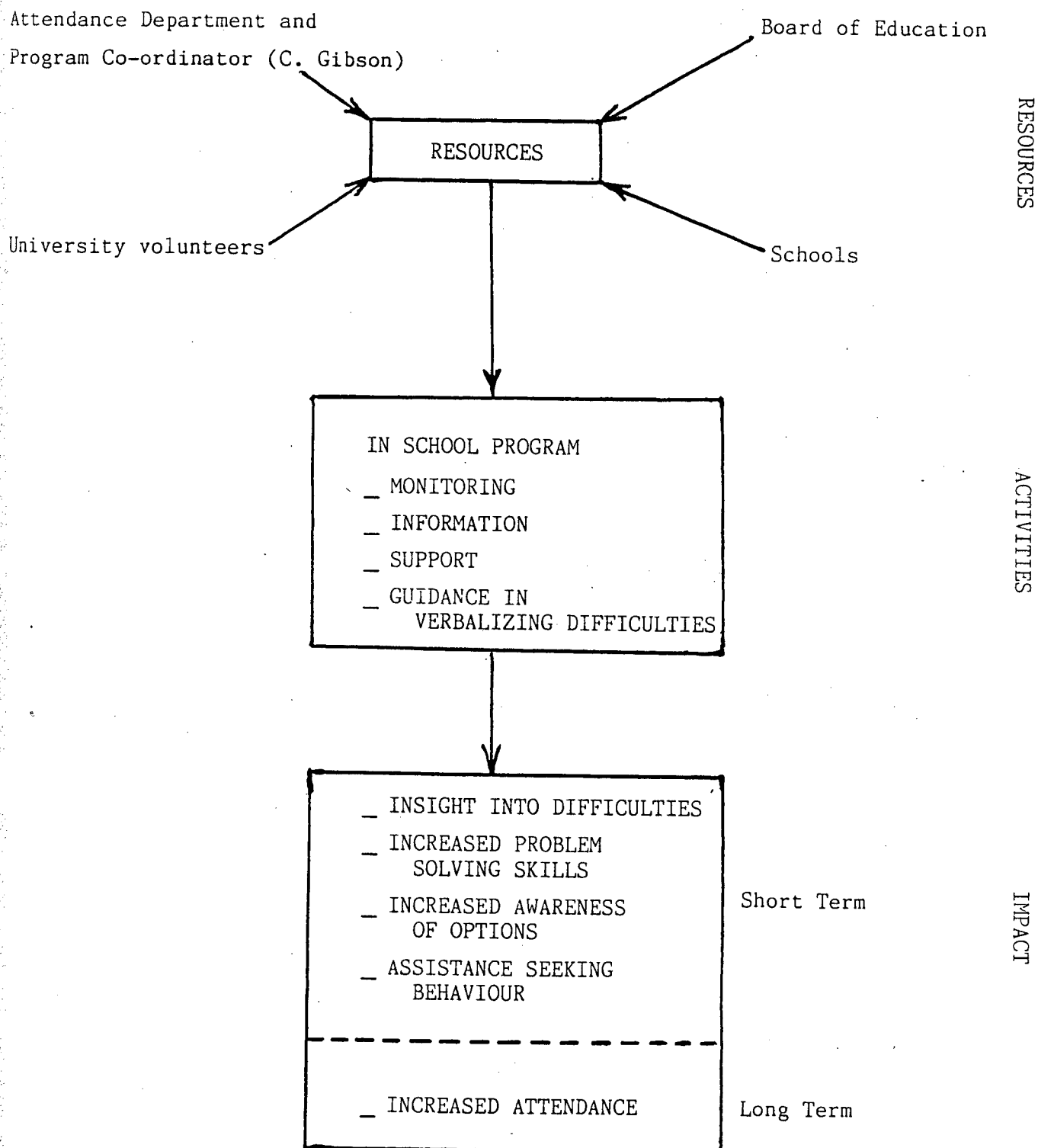
Name of Child _____

Child's Date of Birth _____

Appendix F

Flow Chart of School Attendance Program

FLOW CHART OF SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROGRAM



Appendix G

Feedback Summary

Questionnaire I

WATERLOO COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
ATTENDANCE SURVEY REPORT: 1985

A. Respondents:

In this study 106 questionnaires were mailed to all Waterloo County Board of Education elementary and secondary schools. Ninety questionnaires were returned yielding an 85% response rate. Eighty-six schools could be identified. Four schools did not indicate their school name and were not included in the analysis.

The response rate by geographic area was as follows:

Twenty-two NORTH area schools (71%); Fifteen EAST area schools (75%); Twenty-two WEST area schools (92%) and twenty-seven SOUTH area schools (87%) returned their questionnaires. Ten (71%) high schools and eighty (87%) elementary schools participated in the study.

PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS IN THE ATTENDANCE SURVEY

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Bluevale C.I. | 44. Laurentian |
| 2. Elizabeth Zeigler | 45. Pioneer Park |
| 3. H. W. Wagner | 46. Queen Elizabeth |
| 4. Lincoln Heights | 47. Trillium |
| 5. Elmira D.S.S. | 48. Victoria |
| 6. Connestogo | 49. Forest Heights C. I. |
| 7. Floradale | 50. Forest Hill |
| 8. Heidelberg | 51. Meadowlane |
| 9. John Mahood | 52. Queensmount |
| 10. Linwood | 53. Westheights |
| 11. Riverside | 54. Waterloo-Oxford D. S. S. |
| 12. Three Bridges | 55. Forest Glen |
| 13. Wellesley | 56. Grandview |
| 14. Brighton | 57. New Dundee |
| 15. Cedarbrae | 58. North Wilmot |
| 16. Centennial | 59. Wilmot Senior |
| 17. Empire | 60. Galt C. I. |
| 18. Erbsville | 61. Alison Park |
| 19. Keatsway | 62. Avenue Road |
| 20. MacEachern | 63. Blair Road |
| 21. MacGregor | 64. Centennial |
| 22. Winston Churchill | 65. Hespeler |
| 23. Eastwood | 66. Hillcrest |
| 24. Franklin | 67. Lincoln Avenue |
| 25. Howard Robertson | 68. Manchester |
| 26. Rockway | 69. Glenview Park S. S. |
| 27. Sheppard | 70. Central |
| 28. Grand River C.I. | 71. Chalmers Street |
| 29. Breslau | 72. Little's Corners |
| 30. MacKenzie King | 73. Stewart Avenue |
| 31. Smithson | 74. Grand View |
| 32. Stanley Park | 75. Maple Grove |
| 33. A. R. Kaufman | 76. Parkway |
| 34. Margaret Avenue | 77. Preston |
| 35. Suddaby | 78. Ryerson |
| 36. Westmount | 79. Wm. G. Davis |
| 37. Laurel V. S. | 80. Ayr |
| 38. Cameron Heights | 81. Cecil Cornwell |
| 39. Alpine | 82. Dickie Settlement |
| 40. Country Hills | 83. Dickson |
| 41. Courtland | 84. Highland |
| 42. Doon | 85. St. Andrews |
| 43. J. F. Carmichael | 86. Tait Street |

B. Section I: Background Information

In terms of background information the purpose of this section was to determine what plan or format was currently being followed by Waterloo County schools in handling attendance at the individual school level.

The first two questions in this section asked for a description of both the "attendance plan or program" currently being followed at their school and their particular role in attendance. Seventeen per cent (17%) of the respondents felt that there was no problem at their school or else that the question was not applicable to their particular situation. Fifty-three (62%) schools cited "home contact" as a major part of their program. Thirty-one (36%) have school personnel speak to students and/or parents and 31 schools (36%) utilize the services of the Board Attendance Department. Case conferences or school based teams were cited as part of attendance programs by 12 (14%) schools with referrals to "other personnel" (i.e. PHN, Special Ed.) cited in ten instances (12%). Two schools (2%) felt the University Volunteer Attendance Program was an accepted part of their overall program.

Question #3 was intended to determine the key attendance personnel in the various schools (i.e. principal, vice-principal, guidance counsellor, etc.). However, the wording was confusing and many schools found this question difficult to answer. One-third (33%) of the respondents left the question blank. Thirty-seven schools (43%) cited the principal and nineteen schools (22%) cited the vice-principal as the key attendance person. Other titles ranged from "can't print it" to "Victoria's last resort!"

In terms of monitoring, thirty-three schools (38%) felt the teacher was responsible for attendance. Twenty-eight schools (32%) cited staff (i.e. secretary, teacher, principal or a combination) as monitors and eight respondents (9%) felt the parents were responsible (i.e. Safe Arrival Program). Eleven (13%) comments could only be classified as "other" (e.g., monthly registers).

The results indicate that there are no set conditions for acting on an attendance problem. The answers from twenty-four schools (28%) had to be classified as "other". For example, "if a problem, act", "when I can't reach the home or don't get results", "reason and frequency" were cited as conditions. Nineteen schools (22%) had a set criteria of three days or less. Fifteen schools (17%) would act when a pattern develops. Seven schools (8%) cited teacher concern and three schools (3%) based their actions on results from the Safe Arrival Program.

B. Section I: Background Information - cont'd

Thirty-six (42%) of the respondents chose not to add further comments in the space provided. Of those who elaborated on attendance in their school, twenty-one (24%) further described their program, sixteen (19%) accentuated that there was no attendance problem at their school, eight (9%) commented on the effectiveness of their program and four (5%) highlighted problem areas.

The major finding of this section is the diversity of approach that is currently being followed in individual schools. If frequency of occurrence is any indication of priority, parental/home contact cited 62% of the time is considered most important in dealing with children who are experiencing difficulty attending school regularly. Whether schools contact homes direct (36%) or liaise through the attendance department (36%) or another professional department (12%) depends largely on the school and the specific circumstances.

Question #1: Do you have a definite plan or program for children who have difficulty attending school regularly?

NORTH AREA

- (1) Daily calls home for all absent students; VP contact with students and parents as warranted; case conferences (counsellors and staff); reference to Board Attendance Counsellor
- (2) Did not return form
- (3) I am informed if there is a problem but this very seldom happens
- (4) (1) Counsel Student include input from homeroom teacher
(2) Interview parents (has solved all problems to date)
(3) Report to Attendance Counsellor
- (5) No definite plan or program
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) (1) Call home after 2 consecutive days of absence
(2) Students who after repeated counselling and parental involvement persist in absenting themselves from school for illegitimate reasons will be suspended from school
(a) under 16 years -- refer to Attendance Counsellor
(b) over 16 years -- determine the advisability of returning
- (9) N/A
- (10) If a problem I telephone parent -- check reason and from there we have no need to go further at this time
- (11) No response
- (12) No response
- (13) If attendance is a problem a call to the parent clears it up right away
- (14) No response
- (15) Did not return form
- (16) Parents are contacted twice then attendance office is called if no improvement
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Not a problem
- (19) No
- (20) Did not return form

- (21) Did not return form
- (22) We have not encountered attendance problems that were not resolved rather quickly through counselling pupil and/or parents -- the principal's role
- (23) Phone home; if no result refer
- (24) Referrals are made to guidance counsellor and/or principal by home room teacher
- (25) No
- (26) Our school based team (SBT) discusses child and problems; home is contacted by principal and/or attendance counsellor and/or consultant. The child is counselled by principal and/or remedial teacher
- (27) NIL REPORT -- this does not apply to us
- (28) No
- (29)
 - (1) contact parent/guardian
 - (2) guidance teacher works with student(s)
 - (3) vice-principal/principal discuss appropriate attendance, consequences clarified, if necessary implemented
 - (4) attendance counsellor contacted if persistent problem
- (30) Did not return form
- (31) Phone call then letter from principal

EAST AREA

- (1)
 - (1) contact parents
 - (2) involve guidance counsellor and attendance counsellor
- (2) Only for reason of poor health
- (3)
 - (1) problem is identified -- reason clarified
 - (2) counselling initiated -- encouragement, guidelines, rules, etc.
 - (3) parents involved; plan established and monitored -- teachers often handle the problem themselves first and if the problem persists involve VP
- (4) Parents are contacted and pupils counselled when of appropriate age
- (5)
 - (1) Counselling student
 - (2) Discussion with parent
 - (3) Discussion with PHN
 - (4) Discussion with Sp. Ed. contact
 - (5) Call attendance counsellor
- (6) Did not return form

- (7) Did not return form
- (8) Phone calls to morning absentee, parental involvement, use of behavioural counsellor, SBT, attendance counsellor
- (9) We meet with parents and discuss. We recommend a physical check-up if it is warranted. We suggest it is better to solve the problem without attendance counsellors if possible.
- (10) Did not return form
- (11) No
- (12) Parental conference
- (13) Students who are absent are called on the third day of absence. Individuals with regular attendance problems are contacted each time they are absent. Phone contacts are placed to absentees each morning and afternoon after the attendance has been recorded by the secretary. Individual phone calls are placed to as many homes as is considered necessary or as time permits (2-35 minute periods each day)
- (14) Did not return form
- (15) Students are counselled on the importance of attendance. Any individual situations are dealt with by the Guidance Counsellor, Vice-Principal, Principal
- (16) Did not return form
- (17)
 - (1) Conference with parent
 - (2) Involve university volunteer
 - (3) Refer to attendance counsellor
 - (4) In-school counselling by VP and Counsellor
- (18)
 - (1) Phone home
 - (2) Have parent interview
 - (3) Notify attendance counsellor if necessary
- (19)
 - (1) Counselling at school level
 - (2) Parental conferences
 - (3) Involve attendance department if necessary
- (20)
 - (1) Secretary calls home usually on the second day of absence
 - (2) Difficult cases are called each day of absence
 - (3) If there is no phone, letters are sent after 2 to 4 days

WEST AREA

- * (1)
 - (1) Much parental contact
 - (2) Counselling
 - (3) Program placement
 - (4) Special Ed., V.P.'s all assist
- (2) Parental contact & contract

- (3) (1) Referral to Principal
 (2) Pupil counselling
 (3) Involvement of other personnel (eg. Public Health Nurse) as appropriate
- (4) (1) On-going parental contact
 (2) Involvement with VP
 (3) Involvement with school counsellor
 (4) Involvement with attendance counsellor
 (5) Involvement of university volunteers
- (5) Contact parent -- work with home first. If still presenting a problem contact is made with attendance counsellor
- (6) (1) A phone call home
 (2) Nurse calls or visits home
- (7) (1) Parent interview
 (2) Guidance counsellor works with pupil
 (3) Report to Attendance Counsellor
 (4) Continued counselling with VP and Attendance Counsellor
 (5) Meeting with parents, teacher, Principal, A/C et. al.
- (8) (1) Discuss with parents and child
 (2) Initiate attendance counsellor visit
- (9) We call the parents to get the reason after three days absence
- (10) Contact with the parent and if necessary assistance from the Public Health Nurse usually is sufficient
- (11) Teacher contacts home, if problem persists principal involved, lastly attendance counsellor involved. The Public Health Nurse is also involved where a health concern is indicated.
- (12) Phone each student who is absent by 11:00 a.m. and follow up on those not contacted initially.
- (13) No
- (14) Home contact to express my concern after teacher has expressed concern to home
- (15) (1) Student made aware of problem
 (2) Telephone home (VP)
 (3) Student interview with guidance, nurse or VP
 (4) Attendance graph; letter to home
 (5) Attendance counsellor contacted
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) No: This has not been a problem at this school
- (18) (1) Interact with student
 (2) Interview with parents
 (3) In school needs assessment meeting
 (4) Alternative placement

- (19) Did not return form
- (20) Student "makes up" any time missed (outside of regular school hours). A repeat offence would usually mean involvement of our attendance counsellor. For us this usually occurs twice per year at the most.
- (21) Personal contact
- (22) This is worked out on an individual basis with the family involved.
- (23) Home communication; parents or guardians visit school
- (24)
 - (1) Informal conference with student
 - (2) Formal conference with student
 - (3) Formal conference with parents and student
 - (4) Referral to attendance counsellor

SOUTH AREA

- (1)
 - (1) Student contact
 - (2) Guidance contact
 - (3) Home contact
 - (4) If habitual -- VP contact -- student contact -- home contact
 - (5) If not solved -- school based team -- board attendance counsellor
- (2) Contact parents; discussion with parents and child; utilize attendance officer if necessary
- (3) Teachers fill in a form for attendance problems and send it to the office with registers at the end of each month
- (4) Consultation with teacher; follow up by nurse if necessary
- (5) We call home. Principal will make a home visit if necessary, and Bill Toleff is contacted.
- (6) Attendance is checked regularly by the homeroom teacher and Vice-Principal. Parents are contacted if the child is absent regularly. The attendance counsellor is brought in at this point.
- (7) Work with the child. Call in parents/attendance counsellor/ outside agencies
- (8) Identification, parent contact & consultation with student and/or parent, appropriate consequence (ie. make up time, work caught up) -- SBT referral if necessary
- (9)
 - (1) Principal talk to parents
 - (2) Home visit by nurse
 - (3) Visit by attendance counsellor

- (10) (1) Contact parents daily
(2) Contact Mr. Wm. Toleff -- attendance counsellor
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) (1) Phone calls home
(2) A formal letter home
(3) Call to attendance counsellor
- (13) Once attendance pattern is established, any irregularity is checked by telephone conversation, ie. absence extending beyond a known illness.
- (14) No problem -- form returned, not filled in
- (15) (1) Individual counselling
(2) Parental contact
(3) Involvement of attendance counsellor
(4) Conference of student, parent, teacher, VP and attendance counsellor
(5) Problem persists, possible court action
(6) Follow-up
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Personal contact
- (19) A close check of attendance
- (20) Use Family and Children's Services besides myself to help family
- (21) I first telephone the parents and, if the situation doesn't improve, I send them a letter
- (22) Daily monitoring (attendance check, phone home) by office personnel
- (23) No: not a structured step-by-step program
- (24) Did not return form
- (25) Work with parents and child daily to alleviate problem
- (26) No
- (27) No
- (28) (1) Situation discussed with student
(2) If not corrected the parent is involved, ie. attendance affecting progress -- parent made aware of his responsibility
(3) Attendance counsellor is involved
- (29) Not a problem

- (30) (1) I become involved by talking with student and parent
(2) If problem continues, the problem is brought to SBT meetings
(3) Finally the attendance counsellor becomes involved
- (31) Not a problem

4 UNIDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

- (1) As needed
- (2) Discuss the matter with parent(s)
- (3) N/A
- (4) Secretary contacts family if child is absent one day (1st day)

Question #2: Describe your role in attendance at this school.

NORTH AREA

- (1) Marginally involved in this important facet of school life
- (2) Did not return form
- (3) I am informed if there is a problem but this very seldom happens
- (4) (1) Monitor daily attendance, check with secretary
(2) All absent students are confirmed by telephone
(3) Oversee attendance registers
- (5) Monitor situation, interview student or contact home if appropriate
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) Follow guidelines set out by the school
- (9) No response
- (10) Secretary checks absentees, principal may also follow up if needed. I've placed my objective re: attendance in the parent guide book.
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) Principal to follow up on any or all absences
- (13) No response
- (14) No response
- (15) Did not return form
- (16) Principal. I am aware of any irregular attendance immediately.
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Did not complete form - N/A
- (19) Set up attendance check -- safety reasons
- (20) Did not return form
- (21) Did not return form
- (22) We have not encountered problems that were not resolved rather quickly through counselling pupil and/or parents -- the principal's role
- (23) Supervisory

- (24) To bring together the home and school -- to make referrals to attendance counsellor
- (25) No response
- (26) I do most of the counselling if there is a problem
- (27) Nil report -- this does not apply to us
- (28) No response
- (29) Monitor and assist
- (30) Did not return form
- (31) Principal

EAST AREA

- (1) See and counsel students who have poor attendance, contact parents
- (2) (1) Respond to teacher concerns
(2) Oversee monthly attendance reports
(3) Home contact re: extended illness
- (3) When teachers identify a problem to me I become involved as indicated in question #1 (b)
- (4) Pupils experiencing poor attendance records are referred to me by the classroom teacher
- (5) As above as necessary
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) Involved predominantly with invalid absence
- (9) To be made aware of truancy as soon as it is detected. Then the above procedures go into effect, or we call home to find out
- (10) Did not return form
- (11) As principal discuss with pupil and/or parents
- (12) Monitor daily
- (13) My role is to contact those students who are absent from school each morning and afternoon. We focus our attention particularly on those individuals who are absent more than 2-3 days.
- (14) Did not return form
- (15) The secretary makes the initial home contact and then forwards concerns to the Vice-principal for followup
- (16) Did not return form

- (17) To oversee and follow up severe cases
- (18) Monitor those severe attendance problems
- (19) As principal I provide the above services
- * (20) I interview or see to it that every student who is truant from a class or is truant from school is interviewed. I do what I think is needed to solve the problem.

WEST AREA

- * (1) Vice-principal. Initiate attendance procedures
- (2) Monitor and follow up
- (3) Implementation of above and personal involvement
- (4) See above
- (5) Overseer of problem areas
- (6) Calling the home
- (7) I pursue all attendance problems. I call after prolonged absence (3 days) or when there is suspected truancy. I oversee the sequence described above.
- (8) Monitor attendance sheet. Expect briefing on any attendance problem
- (9) I monitor it by receiving information from teachers
- (10) I support the teacher and provide assistance with the difficult cases
- (11) When the staff feel they have been unsuccessful, I phone and/or write the home. A letter is usually written when there is no phone or when we feel it is more effective. I also contact the attendance counsellor.
- (12) Deal with problem students in grade 13; two Vice-principals work with 9-12
- (13) (1) Phone and check home for a reason
(2) Visit home
(3) Call attendance officer
- (14) To monitor attendance and identify cases and frequency of absenteeism that does not appear legitimate
- (15) In charge (delegated responsibility)
- (16) Did not return form

- (17) (1) Secretary monitors attendance
- (2) Principal discusses chronic lateness with students
- (3) Guidance counsellor is follow-up if attendance is related to social/school difficulties
- * (18) Follow-up on daily subject invalid absence with a view to behaviour change
- (19) Did not return form
- (20) Co-ordinating the procedures for the school
- (21) Check up as principal
- (22) Principal. Check registers along with secretary
- (23) Contact person
- (24) I monitor it monthly. Irregularities are pointed out on a daily basis.

SOUTH AREA

- * (1) In charge of attendance for half the school; directly for half of the grade 11, 12 & 13's and as a last resort for half the grade 9's and 10's if school attendance counsellor is having trouble
- (2) Checking attendance sheets frequently; some calling if volunteer unable to phone that day -- follow up phone calls for unusual or frequent absence
- (3) Monitor and check problems indicated by the teachers
- (4) Support for above
- (5) I check with our secretary and teachers re: outstanding absenteeism
- (6) I regularly consult with the teacher and parents of students with attendance problems. Students with difficulties are interviewed and a plan of action implemented.
- (7) To ensure all pupils arrive regularly and punctually
- (8) Monitor, meet with attendance counsellor regularly, follow-up
- (9) Facilitate the above
- * (10) I look after students with surnames M-Z inclusive
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) Mostly check on registers
- (13) Where child is absent from school and reason is unknown, phone contact is made with parent

- (14) Did not complete form
- (15) (1) Monitor classroom attendance through attendance sheets
(2) Document students experiencing attendance concerns
(3) Close liaison with attendance counsellor
(4) Initiate parent contact
(5) Follow up action
- * (16) Did not return form
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Check up as principal
- (19) Carefully checking to see if pupils miss too many days
- (20) I monitor it. Any serious problems are dealt with
- (21) I check the registers every month and keep track of students who have a record of poor attendance
- (22) (1) The above when secretary is not in (30% of the time)
(2) Making personal calls to parents when/as required
- (23) Involvement with persistent cases
- (24) Did not return form
- (25) Teacher makes initial contact on problems; I follow up if problem persists
- (26) Check attendance; discuss problems with parents; contact Attendance Counsellor if needed
- (27) No response
- (28) Principal in a Junior School
- (29) Encouragement
- (30) Vice-principal (one of my duties is to monitor student attendance)
- (31) Monitor attendance with secretarial and teacher assistance, and follow up on cases of frequent absence

4 UNIDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

- (1) Monitor regularly through teacher
- (2) No response
- (3) Call after three days absent by pupil to arrange for work to be sent home
- (4) I monitor unusual absence -- pupils who are absent 4-5 days

Question #4: How is attendance monitored at this school?

NORTH AREA

- * (1) 2 secretaries; all teaching staff; 2 Vice-principals
- (2) Did not return form
- (3) Attendance sheet to office every day
- (4) Parents are asked to call the school when their child is absent
(school calls when a family fails to make contact)
- (5) Home room teacher monitors attendance difficulties
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- * (8) As per school guidelines
- (9) Home room teacher keeps register; enquiries among students and
telephone calls to parents
- (10) By attendance sheets; telephone calls
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) By staff/parents
- (13) Did not answer question
- (14) Did not answer question
- (15) Did not return form
- (16) SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM. If a parent has not called re: child
absence -- we call them AM and PM
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Did not answer question
- (19) Teacher & secretary note unexplained absence of more than three
days
- (20) Did not return form
- * (21) Did not return form
- (22) Mainly through teachers. On occasion "lates must report to the
office if a problem appears to be developing.
- (23) By teacher
- (24) By home room teachers -- attendance taken at 9:00 a.m. and
1:00 p.m. daily

- (25) Attendance concerns of the pupil are expressed by the teacher to the principal
- (26) By teachers and principal is notified
- (27) Did not complete form
- (28) Daily check a.m. and p.m.
- (29) Attendance sheets are marked by homeroom teachers at 8:55 and 12:55 -- sent directly to the office; students carry attendance sheets to each class
- (30) Did not return form
- (31) Monthly registers

EAST AREA

- (1) Grade 9 & 10 phone every day; Grade 11, 12 & 13 phone if away 2 days
- (2) By the secretary and principal
- (3) By the teachers
- (4) By the classroom teacher
- (5) Staff inform principal of attendance irregularities through daily attendance taking
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) Daily home room attendance and period by period
- (9) By teacher and in the office every morning and at noon
- (10) Did not return form
- (11) (1) By teachers and office
(2) Daily attendance sheets to office each day
- (12) Daily check of class lists
- (13) Attendance is monitored by checking the attendance slips handed into the office each morning and afternoon by the student attendance monitors
- (14) Did not return form
- (15) All absent senior students are phoned and some of the absent primary and junior students are phoned as well
- (16) Did not return form

- (17) By sponsor teachers who complete daily attendance checks and registers -- referral made to VP when necessary
- (18) (1) Parents call if the student is to be absent
(2) School secretary calls others who are absent but no calls have come in
- (19) SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM in effect
- * (20) (1) Homeroom check
(2) Every period is checked throughout the day after homeroom
(3) Attendance sheets handed in to main office by all teachers after their last class

WEST AREA

- * (1) Teacher reports to the main office -- validation of absences, VP follow-up parent contact
- (2) Notable daily concerns are passed on by the secretary
- (3) Class attendance forms entered by teachers (a.m. and p.m.), parents urged to call when pupils absent, parents called if they don't contact us, daily register
- (4) Daily attendance reports
- (5) For K-6 a daily attendance check is entered on a monthly sheet and sent to the office. Along with this method the 7 and 8's take daily attendance sheet on rotary
- (6) Each classroom
- (7) Each form has an attendance board. Attendance is checked each period by the teachers
- (8) Each classroom teacher checks attendance at the beginning of a.m. and p.m. classes -- contacts the office if a student is absent
- (9) Teachers send notes and registers
- (10) Attendance sheets are submitted to the office by 9:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m. each day
- (11) By the staff generally -- daily; In certain cases I want immediate knowledge of certain pupils
- (12) Teacher to secretary to vice-principals or teachers to vice-principals
- (13) Secretary/teacher via daily register
- (14) Daily a.m. and p.m. attendance reports are submitted to the office

- (15) (1) Daily attendance sheets are circulated with the class monitor
- (2) Teachers mark and initial each period. Notes are placed in envelope, returned to office by 3:10 and recorded by secretary in register
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) Secretary calls home when student is absent
- (18) (1) Daily attendance checks
- (2) Phone calls home by VP
- (3) Subject attendance by teacher, referrals to VP
- (19) Did not return form
- (20) Each classroom teacher keeps attendance in register and ensures that written notes are received to validate any absences
- (21) Attendance forms to office, follow-up by phone
- (22) Daybook of each teacher, transferred to daily register by teacher
- (23) Register
- (24) Attendance is checked each period, reported to the office each half day

SOUTH AREA

- (1) Daily phoning, teacher referral, computer printouts, daily attendance sheet
- (2) Attendance boards sent to office in a.m. and p.m. at the beginning
- (3) Monthly, when registers are varified
- (4) Teacher to office
- (5) Daily attendance sheet goes around to every class -- morning and afternoon
- (6) Teachers record attendance on a daily attendance report. Upon returning to school students must bring a note of explanation to their teacher. Teachers contact the parents when problems arise.
- (7) Classroom teacher checks attendance -- informs office, registers checked each month -- accumulative attendance checked in OSR yearly and on new students
- (8) Daily attendance boards sent to office a.m. and p.m.
- (9) Attendance board sent to office each morning.

- (10) Attendance taken at 9:00 a.m., absentees called (notes to follow), each teacher takes attendance each period and this is checked the following day
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) Through monthly checks and daily phone calls -- SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM
- (13) (1) Grade 5 pupil takes class attendance list to teachers who update twice daily
(2) Where no prior contact in case of absence or late, home contact is made by phone
- (14) Did not complete form
- (15) Use of attendance sheets which are sent to the office at 9:15a.m. and 1:00 p.m.; teachers will check attendance at these times in their home rooms
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) 2 times daily, 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.
- (19) By an informal check by me
- (20) From register check, also have SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM
- (21) I check the registers at the end of every month
- (22) (1) Attendance taken by classroom teacher
(2) Attendance sheet submitted to office
(3) Office check against "phone in slips"
(4) Parents called if they have not phoned in
(5) Reason for absence returned to classroom teacher
(6) Record of daily attendance recorded in register by teacher
- (23) (1) Attendance records through the office
(2) Secretary does initial screening with calls
(3) Refers major concerns to me or guidance counsellor
- (24) Did not return form
- (25) Classroom teacher
- (26) Regular attendance forms, visit by attendance counsellor
- (27) Parents call if a child is going to be absent and give reason
- (28) Attendance clipboards are kept at the office and attendance is checked twice a day -- irregular patterns are monitored
- (29) SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM

- (30) (1) Sponsor base attendance is taken a.m. and p.m.
- (2) Rotary class attendance is taken throughout the day
- (3) Rotary class attendance sheets are returned to the office
 and are cross referenced with the sponsor sheets

(31) No response

4 UNIDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

- (1) Teacher informs office
- (2) Via class teacher
- (3) Daily attendance sheets
- (4) Call family the 1st day child is absent; Follow-up lengthy periods
 of absence

Question #5: What are the conditions at this school before you act on an attendance problem?

NORTH AREA

- (1) Unsure of question's point
- (2) Did not return form
- (3) Home contacted if child away 3 days or more
- (4) Reason and frequency
- (5) The situation re: attendance needs to be recognized
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) As per school guidelines
- (9) Did not answer question
- (10) If they do not show up at 9:00 we call before noon if possible
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) A child must fail to attend on a regular basis and not be exempt from attending. We don't have any as we have no attendance problems.
- (13) Did not answer question
- (14) Did not answer question
- (15) Did not return form
- (16) See 1(b)
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Did not answer question
- (19) Unexplained absence
- (20) Did not return form
- (21) Did not return form
- (22) None usually -- each case is handled as seen appropriate not according to a set of conditions
- (23) Teacher concerns
- (24) Very irregular ie. very poor
- (25) Extended absence without legitimate reason

- (26) Absence of 3 days
- (27) Did not complete form
- (28) Did not answer question
- (29) If a problem, act
- (30) Did not return form
- (31) Each case is individual

EAST AREA

- (1) Don't have a magic number of days absent before inviting attendance counsellor
- (2) Teacher exhausted all classroom procedures
- (3) Frequent tardiness, half day absences, lack of notes or telephone calls, etc.
- (4) Students whose attendance is irregular without just reason, excessive inattendance is affecting performance and lateness without good reason are referred.
- (5) After 3 consecutive unexplained days; suspected truancy
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) The student is absent
- (9) Obvious truancy or frequent absence
- (10) Did not return form
- (11) Pattern of absence; many days (3-5) and concern for reason
- (12) Contact parents 9:15 a.m. or 1:15 p.m.
- (13) Absence greater than 3 days, habitual absence, teacher initiated concern, parent concern, student refusal to come to school
- (14) Did not return form
- (15) Any irregular or unacceptable patterns
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) Home consulted upon three days of absence or when any irregular attendance pattern becomes evident or when a specific crisis (ie. death in the family) may precipitate an attendance problem
- (18) Absent for extended period -- no explanation

(19) Act immediately based on results of SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM

(20) When I can't reach the home or don't get results

WEST AREA

(1) Response after first absence to parent by telephone

(2) It varies with the child

(3) We act as soon as we suspect a problem exists

(4) Contact the home after 3 days (earlier for chronic problem students)

(5) 3rd day absent, request from teacher or prompted suspicion .

(6) If home doesn't contact school, the school calls

(7) 3 day absence teacher calls; repeated absence, truancy -- VP calls

(8) If absent 3 or more days and illness is not the reason

(9) 3 days absence

(10) Unexplained, frequent and irregular absences are investigated

(11) Immediately find out from siblings; phone call 3rd day (sometimes first or second)

(12) On each and every absence

(13) Away from school 3-4 days

(14) I make home contact about my concern after teacher has expressed concern to home

(15) Student absent for 3 days or teacher request

(16) Did not return form

(17) Unusual pattern; chronic lateness

(18) Invalid subject absence on daily absence

(19) Did not return form

(20) Did not answer question

(21) Not aware of reason for absence

(22) Dealt with on an individual basis through teacher

(23) Did not answer question

(24) If it is perceived to be a problem, we act

SOUTH AREA

- (1) Early for grades 9 and 10. On 2nd consecutive day for grades 11, 12 & 13
- (2) Teacher often alerts office of problem
- (3) Accumulation of excessive absences and/or lates
- (4) 3 days or more; immediately if suspicious of absence
- (5) Usually the 2nd day if we are not informed by the home
- (6) When actions taken by homeroom teacher fail to correct the problem
- (7) Immediately if no satisfactory note from home
- (8) Irregular attendance pattern or suspected truancy
- (9) Did not answer question
- (10) The student is regularly absent
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) A consistent attendance problem without good reason
- (13) Attendance update is given to principal who evaluates situation
- (14) Did not complete form
- (15)
 - (1) Persistent truancy
 - (2) Teacher concerns
 - (3) Pattern of truancy develops
 - (4) Parental concerns
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Not aware of reason for absence
- (19) An individual assessment of each case when needed
- (20) Teacher referral re: attendance problem
- (21) In my opinion, poor attendance
- (22) Problem identified by classroom teacher
- (23) Try to phone all absenteeisms in the a.m./p.m.; attendance affecting performance can't reach parents
- (24) Did not return form
- (25) Persistent absence or lateness

- (26) Usually 2-3 day absence without notification
- (27) Did not answer question
- (28) SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM/ inform parents daily
- (29) Constantly recurring absence/ not a problem yet
- (30) If it's a known problem I act immediately, otherwise 3 continuous days is the limit
- (31) No set criteria

4 UNIDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

- (1) 3 days absent then contact counsellor
- (2) Continued absence without reason
- (3) 3 days absent
- (4) Lengthy absence (4-5 days) with no reasonable explanation

Question #6: What further comments have you on how attendance is handled in this school?

NORTH AREA

- (1) Did not comment
- (2) Did not return form
- (3) Basically it has not been an issue or a problem
- (4) I am fortunate to be in a school where parents are caring and responsible. Parent interviews to date have resolved all attendance concerns.
- (5) There are few attendance problems to be dealt with at this school at this time
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) No comment
- (9) We have a keen group of students and teachers. Our major problem re: attendance is having to send students home who are too sick and should not have come at all, but parents gave in to student pleas. I therefore have no input for the major part of this survey based on experiences at this school.
- (10) Usually, here in the country setting parents will call in or send a note
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) No comment
- (13) No comment
- (14) No comment
- (15) Did not return form
- (16) No problems!
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) No comment
- (19) Attendance problems are virtually non-existent
- (20) Did not return form
- (21) Did not return form
- (22) Has been effective to this point in time

- (23) No comment
- (24) Homeroom teachers are given the major responsibility of attendance monitoring and contact with home. Other resources are not involved until no headway is being realized.
- (25) No comment
- (26) No comment
- (27) No comment
- (28) No comment
- (29) (1) Our alert secretary notes those absent -- phones homes of specific individuals or advises administration of absence, calls are made quickly.
(2) A co-operative system -- teachers/secretary/guidance counsellor/vice-principal/principal -- our school based team discusses problems
- (30) Did not return form
- (31) No comment

EAST AREA

- (1) No comment
- (2) Home contact and parent interview
- (3) We have to rely on teachers to report suspected attendance problems etc. so the effectiveness is only as good as the diligence of the teachers to report.
- (4) Generally we have been successful in our approach. Some difficulty has been experienced with several grade one and two boys with lateness.
- (5) It is seldom necessary to act on an attendance problem at this school. We have a SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM.
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) Attendance consumes a great deal of staff time both secretarial and administrative. Our degree of success depends almost totally on the stability of the home background (or lack of it) and the degree of the student's involvement in part-time work.
- (9) We call all homes that do not call us when a pupil will be absent. If we are not certain about a pupil's reason for absence, we call.
- (10) Did not return form

- (11) Generally very little problem in this area. Attendance counsellor involved only once in 6 years.
- (12) No comment
- (13)
 - (1) Students who begin to show a regular pattern of absence are "red flagged" and called each time they are absent.
 - (2) Parents are contacted and asked to call each time this same student is absent due to sickness.
 - (3) Truant cases are dealt with by the principal after referral from the school attendance counsellor.
 - (4) Individual profiles are developed and filed for future reference
 - (5) Letters may be sent requesting parents signature for (4) above
 - (6) Students may serve detentions after school for lates or truancy
 - (7) Parent phone contacts are initiated for those students who have begun to develop an attendance problem
 - (8) East area attendance officer John Stevenson is contacted if continual truancy exists
- (14) Did not return form
- (15) We make home contact with all the senior students who are absent and home contact in some situations in the primary and junior divisions.
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) No comment
- (18) No comment
- (19) The parent volunteers are not always reliable. The secretary has to pick up the slack. Attendance has not been a problem at this school this year. We had to call the attendance counsellor on two occasions and it was a parent problem, not the students, in both cases.
- (20) Our system is fairly time consuming but it is a good system

WEST AREA

- (1) A lot of time and effort is expended
- (2) No comment
- (3)
 - (1) Attendance problems are "rare"
 - (2) Occasional truancy has been corrected through principal contact with parents
- (4) Frequently encounter great difficulty contacting the parents. (Many are single parents.) Nearly all parents work. Some homes do not have a telephone.

- (5) A total bussed school is somewhat unique in the area of attendance. Lates are almost non-existent, as well as unexplained absences. Notes and/or phone calls are expected to explain an absence.
- (6) No comment
- (7) Problems with absenteeism and truancy are discovered very quickly. VP and homeroom teachers work together closely. Attendance counsellor and school have regular communications re: new cases; follow-up on previous cases.
- (8) SAFE ARRIVAL PROGRAM is used
- (9) No comment
- (10) No comment
- (11) Procedures are determined by the nature of the individual pupil involved
- (12) We may involve counsellors depending on circumstances. Attendance counsellors may be involved where we make no progress.
- (13) No comment
- (14) None really because it hasn't appeared to be a particular problem
- (15) No comment
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) No comment
- (18) Our initial approach to a student's absence is in the collaborative mode. Repetitive absence leads to the imposition of deterrence as a means to behaviour change. Considerable home contact results from our attendance handling efforts and we try to work closely with the home and the student to improve poor attendance patterns.
- (19) Did not return form
- (20) Student makes up any time missed (outside of regular school hours). A "repeat" offence would usually mean involvement of our attendance counsellor. For us this usually occurs twice per year at the most.
- (21) No comment
- (22) (1) We call when we suspect there is a problem
(2) If teachers in any doubt after three days we call
(3) Parents are encouraged to call in especially if absence will be longterm.
- (23) At my school I have not, nor do I expect any attendance problems. Almost any questions I answer for this survey would be from previous experiences at senior schools and would not pertain to North Wilmot.

(24) No comment

SOUTH AREA

(1) Team approach

(2) (1) No other concerns

(2) Chronic lates seem to be more of a problem

(3) No comment

(4) Works well

(5) It works! Bill is excellent

(6) Persistent problems are discussed at our "School Based Team" meeting. Special counselling may be recommended or new strategies suggested.

(7) Pattern develops (late certain morning etc.) immediately if child has a history of lateness or absenteeism

(8) We feel it is handled quite well -- mainly due to a conscientious attendance counsellor who is in our school to meet weekly with me to identify and work on potential attendance concerns.

(9) We have phone calls made by secretary and/or principal each morning and afternoon of absent people.

(10) We feel that attendance at school is very important, and keep as tight a control as possible on it. Everything possible is done to make sure the student is in the classroom.

(11) Did not return form

(12) No comment

(13) No comment

(14) No comment

(15) Because of our excellent attendance counsellor, Mr. Bill Toleff, potential attendance concerns are nipped in the bud. Bill does an excellent job of monitoring attendance and his diligent efforts are certainly appreciated.

(16) Did not return form

(17) Did not return form

(18) No comment

(19) We really don't and haven't had this concern here at this school.

(20) No comment

- (21) No comment
- (22) No comment
- (23) Most consequences are ineffective for street wise students who have little parental control. **ARMS program is one of the few worthwhile alternatives.
- (24) Did not return form
- (25) No comment
- (26) (1) Not a problem in our community
(2) Usually able to tackle before a major problem develops
(3) Have services of student in program at WLU
- (27) We have had only one attendance problem in 17 years and that one occurred 10 years ago. We have a primary school with all pupils transported by bus. Perhaps these factors make problems non-existent. Parents are very conscientious re: calling us regarding pupil absence.
- (28) The home situation plays a key part in regular attendance. Getting home support and providing a positive learning atmosphere at school are crucial.
- (29) No comment
- (30) (1) I don't give detentions for being late
(2) Truancy usually gets 5 detentions
- (31) No comment

4 UNIDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

- (1) Internal checking begins the day of the absence
- (2) No comment
- (3) No comment
- (4) Generally one or two cases per year become attendance problems

C. Section II: Perception of the W.C.B.E. Attendance Department

Section II presents information regarding the current perception of the Waterloo County Board of Education attendance department. This information will be used as baseline data for assessing any future modifications the department deems necessary to improve their service in order to meet the changing needs of W.C.B.E. children and schools.

The most frequently cited condition for schools referring children to attendance counsellors is the inability of the school to remedy the problem. Thirty-eight respondents (44%) commented that they refer when their resources are exhausted or become ineffective. Twenty-seven schools (31%) use frequency as the referral condition and twelve (14%) felt the question was not applicable because they don't refer children at all.

Once a referral is made, twenty-six schools (30%) expect attendance counsellors to act as a resource and work with the school in advising and dealing with poor attendance. Sixteen schools (19%) described the attendance counsellors expected role as one of following up "as a last resort". Twelve schools (14%) expect counsellors to "lay on guidelines" and work with parents whereas five schools (6%) specifically cite individual student counselling as the role of the attendance counsellor.

No school felt that the attendance department was spending "too much" time at their school. In total, fifty schools (58%) felt that the department was spending an "appropriate amount of time" in the schools. Six respondents (7%) checked "some time" and fifteen (17%) checked "no comment".

Half (50%) of the responding schools felt that they utilized the services of the attendance department "some time". Twenty (23%) felt that they did not use the attendance department at all, seven (8%) used them "very often", and four (5%) did not comment.

In terms of usefulness, twenty-six schools (30%) felt the services performed were "very useful", with an equal number (30%) rating them as "useful". Three (3%) respondents felt the services were "not at all useful" and seventeen (20%) marked "no comment".

The 'further comments section' was used to accentuate the lack of need for such a service at specific schools, praise the services of the department in other schools and note areas where improvements are needed.

Question #1: What are the conditions at this school for referring a child to an attendance counsellor?

NORTH AREA

- (1) Extended, unexplained or unapproved absence combined with unco-operative or ineffectual parent.
- (2) Did not return form
- (3) Never have
- (4) Frequency, reason, lack of parental support
- (5) Severe absenteeism that cannot be explained in a reasonably, logical way. Repeated absences are watched carefully.
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8) Persistent truancy of student under the age of 16 years
- (9) N/A
- (10) If persistent absence then attendance counsellor can also make a call
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) Child not in school
- (13) Did not comment
- (14) Did not comment
- (15) Did not return form
- (16) After parent has been contacted twice and no action or improvement
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Did not comment
- (19) No co-operation from parents
- (20) Did not return form
- (21) Did not return form
- (22) Attendance problems where; (a) parents can't be reached;
(b) responsibility of separated parents is not clearly defined
ie. child lives at different addresses from time to time
- (23) We can't remedy the problem

- (24) When we do not make any improvement in the situation
- (25) Teacher and principal make this decision
- (26) After prolonged truancy and all school counselling has been exhausted
- (27) Did not comment
- (28) Did not comment
- (29)
 - (1) Discussions with staff re: solution to problems
 - (2) Talking with student
 - (3) Interpreting law
 - (4) Working with parents
 - (5) Finding out openings in alternative programs assisting in placing students
 - (6) May require in-home instruction situation now commencing
- (30) Did not return form
- (31) When letter from principal is not effective

EAST AREA

- (1) We have run out of options; are frustrated and appear to be getting no results
- (2) Teacher and principal efforts prove unsuccessful
- (3) We have had two instances where the attendance counsellor had to be involved in the past four years
- (4) When our influence on parent/student diminishes to the extent it is no longer effective
- (5) Continuous intermittent absence; more than three days unexplained absence
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- (8)
 - (1) Only under 16 years
 - (2) As a last resort
- (9) Persistent truancy that the school and home together cannot resolve
- (10) Did not return form
- (11) Many absences with suspicions as to reasons with little response to our contacts and efforts
- (12) Have had no referrals from this school

- (13) East area attendance officer John Stevenson is contacted if continual
- * (14) Did not return form
- (15) Only severe cases that are re-occurring are referred
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) (1) Chronic attendance problem.
(2) When in-school measures ie. phone calls, counselling of counsellor or VP, consultation with parents prove ineffective
- (18) Severe attendance problems
- (19) When parents and/or student cannot be reached after repeated attempts
- * (20) When I can't contact the home or they don't respond to letters

WEST AREA

- * (1) As a last resort when no contact with home seems possible
- (2) Only one possible case referred -- no feedback -- followed through from within the school
- (3) During the year and one-half that I have been at this school, the very few problems have resolved without referral.
- (4) When the efforts of the school personnel are not solving the problem
- (5) Repeated truancy or suspicion of keeping children at home without acceptable reason, or suspicion of school phobia
- (6) Not attending
- (7) (1) When it seems a pattern of absenteeism or truancy is developing
(2) When notes have been forged
(3) When it seems the parent may be covering for a student
- (8) Continuous absence and illness is not the problem or parent is not supportive
- (9) We check for patterns re: absenteeism eg. Mon./Fri. or longer term absent patterns
- (10) Lack of co-operation from the parent/guardian results in contact with the attendance counsellor
- (11) When this school has tried all its avenues and still don't feel that success (regular attendance) has been achieved

- (12) A last resort; We attempt to do our own problem solving; If it's impossible to make contact with the home
- (13) (1) Continual absence
(2) Long history of missing 2-3 days at a time for no reason
- (14) This would occur if teacher and principal contacts with home did not bring about improvement
- (15) Final attempt
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) (1) Lengthy absence
(2) Lack of parental response to absence
- (18) Serious attendance problems where working with the school and the home is not producing positive change behaviour
- (19) Did not return form
- (20) A repeat offence would usually mean involvement of our Attendance Counsellor. For us this usually occurs twice per year.
- (21) Not needed yet
- (22) We act when the communication between parents and school break down
- (23) If a child was continually "skipping school" or having problems with the law
- (24) If our intervention has been ineffective then we go to the attendance counsellor

SOUTH AREA

- (1) Under 16 - habitual attendance problem
 - our efforts are not working
 - school based team thinks it's best
- (2) Weak responses re: whereabouts of student during time missed from both student or parent
- (3) Excessive absences and/or lates
- (4) N/A
- (5) It is very easy - we contact Bill Toleff
- (6) We meet every Thursday morning to go over the attendance records of those students whom he is monitoring. Every child showing signs of being an attendance problem is discussed.
- (7) Inability to solve the problem in school -- hookey playing and lack of parental responsibility

- (8) Consistent absenteeism, where the situation is not correcting itself, where home situation may be a factor in problem continuing * Child not referred -- we work together on the problem
- (9) Habitual absenteeism
- (10) Parents & I cannot make the student come to school on a regular basis
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) A consistent attendance problem without good reason
- (13) Referral made only when absence pattern reason(s) become unacceptable to principal and teacher
- (14) No comment
- (15)
 - (1) Persistent truancy
 - (2) VP initiated
 - (3) Self initiated. Bill does this every week.
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) Not needed yet
- (19) To date, none
- (20) Hardly ever use
- (21) I haven't had need to do this yet (at Preston Public)
- (22) An ongoing problem identified by the principal. Principal has had little effect on rectifying the problem
- (23) Consistent pattern of absenteeism -- discussed with child, home before referral -- no change in behaviour
- (24) Did not return form
- (25) If I can't change pattern, make referral
- (26)
 - (1) Informal request when needed
 - (2) Usually between 15-20 days warrants follow-up
- (27) No comment
- (28) Attendance patterns are discussed with attendance counsellor and concerns are raised from both sides
- (29) Suspicious recurring absence
- (30) If the student is consistently an attendance problem, I then will discuss this with my attendance counsellor during his weekly visit to the school.

- (31) Consistently poor attendance -- no satisfactory explanation from parents

4 UNIDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

- (1) Unexplained absence where we suspect truancy
- (2) Frequent absence without satisfactory explanation
- (3) Continued or prolonged absence for no valid reason
- (4) Lengthy absence - 10-20 days

Question #2: Would you please describe the role expected of the attendance counsellor at this school?

NORTH AREA

- * (1) To act as a resource -- ideas, information. To visit homes of children referred
- (2) Did not return form
- (3) Have not used him
- (4) (1) Yearly review at school (personal visit)
(2) Support all reported attendance concerns
- (5) The attendance counsellor contacts the school, then contacts the home as a follow-up to school contacts, and often Public Health Nurse contacts
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form
- * (8) (1) Counsel students who are persistently truant
(2) Explain alternative if under age student unwilling to attend school
- (9) I appreciate the fact that the A.C. visits the school to introduce himself. I feel confident he would assist if required.
- (10) Follow up on problems
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) Consult with me when I have been unsuccessful in having a child return to school; work appropriately for a time, turn it over to attendance counsellor at appropriate time as per Ed. Act and Reg.
- (13) No comment
- (14) No comment
- (15) Did not return form
- (16) Act as promptly as possible to contact parents
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) No comment
- (19) Not sure having never needed service
- (20) Did not return form
- * (21) Did not return form

- (22) (1) To offer suggestions to school personnel following counselling with pupil/parent
- (2) To investigate problem areas
- (3) To be in close contact with police and social service groups; to be prompt; to be empathetic
- (23) Spell out to the parent their responsibility to have the child attend
- (24) To pick up where we have failed (?) - and to provide assistance in monitoring a non-supportive home situation
- (25) To follow up any requests made by the school
- (26) Do follow-up for school/talk to parents and children and keep school informed
- (27) No comment
- (28) No comment
- (29) No comment
- (30) Did not return form
- (31) Follow-up to principal's letter noting legal responsibility of parents

EAST AREA

- (1) Contact the home, interview student and parents
- (2) (1) Discuss case with teacher and principal
- (2) Visit the home
- (3) Counsel the child with parents present
- (4) Report back to the school re: action
- (5) Make recommendations to the school re: procedures to follow
- (3) (1) Handle severe problems of constant absenteeism, where contact of home has been difficult, ie. no phone
- (2) Contact made with parents, resolutions agreed to re: importance of attendance at school
- (3) Communicate information to school and how we could assist in resolving problem
- (4) Advisor as to effective methods in dealing with inattendance. Also procedures involving other organizations in assisting with the problem
- (5) (1) To contact the home
- (2) To follow up cases of truancy if necessary
- (3) To advise the principal in dealing with attendance problems
- (6) Did not return form
- (7) Did not return form

- * (8) (1) Home visits as opposed to form letters to parents
 (2) Facilitator in SALEP proceedings
 (3) Available upon request
- (9) To intervene in the above situation so that appropriate action can be taken to resolve the problem
- (10) Did not return form
- (11) As a last resort
- (12) Support/Home contact
- (13) No comment
- * (14) Did not return form
- (15) When the A.R. Kaufman Vice-Principal and Secretary make a decision that there is an attendance problem, the attendance counsellor is notified. We expect the attendance counsellor will make a phone contact or a home visit that day or the next day at the very latest.
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) (1) To make home visit
 (2) To consult appropriate services if attendance problem persists
- (18) To follow up on any referrals
- (19) To respond on short notice, promptly
- * (20) (1) To get in touch with the parents/guardians
 (2) In most cases a visit to the home at "off hours" is needed
 (3) To help us to communicate with the family. What are the needs?

WEST AREA

- * (1) Action on referral ASAP and feedback
- (2) In other words Bill Toleff was an excellent support person for family and teachers. At this school I have no experience
- (3) Following referral - (1) Pupil and/or parent counselling
 (2) Outline to parents the legal requirements of parents regarding school attendance
 (3) Investigation
 (4) Referral to court
- (4) (1) Weekly visits
 (2) Checking attendance of proven truants
 (3) Home visits when necessary
 (4) Weekly contact with the VP and Guidance Counsellor
 (5) Parent meetings when necessary
 (6) Speak to former attendance problems

- (5) As we do not experience unexplained absences or truancy very often, we have "relinquished" our half day to our counsellors' discretion. We initiate the contact.
- (6) Check on whereabouts of child
- (7)
 - (1) Initial contact with student to express a serious concern from without the school
 - (2) Ongoing counselling and encouragement for students with problems, also parents at school
 - (3) Home visitations
- (8) Assist through visitation and counselling
- (9) I like him/her to check with parents and lay on guidelines
- (10) The attendance counsellor is expected to provide information and assistance in relation to attendance concerns; to meet with the parent in as supportive a manner as possible; to provide the necessary follow-up
- (11)
 - (1) To react to a call as soon as possible (we all hope immediately)
 - (2) To hopefully achieve success in reversing the attendance pattern of the pupil concerned
 - (3) Keep in touch with the school during this process
- (12) Some immediate, direct action
- (13)
 - (1) Visit the home
 - (2) Impress the family on regular attendance
 - (3) Provide support or remove support to get student to school
 - (4) Take to court as a final step
- (14) To support the school through home contacts, meeting and/or communication with parent and meeting and/or communicating with offending child after school has followed its step to correct the problem
- (15)
 - (1) Interview student
 - (2) Follow up with direct home contact
 - (3) Develop plan of action & consequences in co-operation with school
 - (4) Legal action
- (16) Did not return form
- (17)
 - (1) Follow-up on attendance problems
 - (2) Inform parents of school policy
- (18) Based on past performances at this school, the attendance counsellor is expected to help out with serious attendance problems. However, a more involved, regular attendance counsellor -- initiating of monitoring of student attendance problems would be welcome.
- (19) Did not return form

- (20) During the 2.5 years that I have been here, I have had to consult with him very few times. I expect fast intervention in a counselling capacity and I get it.
- (21) To follow up after all school attempts fail
- (22) We call when we need time spent on the issue of attendance
- (23) Come to the school if requested
- (24) (1) To meet with school personnel
(2) To meet with students and parents

SOUTH AREA

- (1) Help solve attendance problems
- (2) To follow up on extended or frequent absence when reason given is not considered adequate or satisfactory
- (3) Contact with home by letter or visit
- (4) N/A
- (5) Home visits - counselling -- keep principal aware of progress
- (6) (1) To facilitate the procedures described in terms of monitoring attendance
(2) To counsel students regarding attendance matters
(3) To work closely with personnel, to keep abreast of school issues and concerns regarding attendance
- (7) Our attendance counsellor is "one in a million". He drops in periodically if in the area & will make his presence known to a particular pupil if I request it. This type of preventative service has meant we have only had to call him once (officially) in the past four years.
- (8) (1) Familiarity with the problem -- interviews with the student
(2) Letter home (if necessary)
(3) Home visitation (if necessary)
(4) Follow-up
- (9) To act when called upon
- (10) If a student is referred to him: He calls the home. He visits the home. He counsels the student.
- (11) Did not return form
- (12) (1) To discuss problem with the principal
(2) To contact or visit home
(3) To write an official letter if necessary
- (13) Attendance counsellor provides another means of checking on a dubious reason for absence

- (14) No comment
- (15)
 - (1) Monitor persistent attendance problems
 - (2) Be available for student counselling
 - (3) Parental contact and follow-up
 - (4) Home visitation
 - (5) Initiate court action if required
- (16) Did not return form
- (17) Did not return form
- (18) To follow-up after all school attempts fail
- (19) We haven't needed him to date
- (20) No comment
- (21) As yet, I have had nothing to do with them. At my previous school (Westmount) I felt their service was very poor. In my mind she tended to ignore referrals from elementary schools and devoted her time to the senior public and high schools. Eventually I stopped referring students and dealt with the problem myself.
- (22) Follow-up (home visit or phone call) re: the problem as identified by the principal
- (23)
 - (1) Visit home, to discuss situation
 - (2) Constant monitoring of student progress
 - (3) Review -- follow up on case previously referred
 - (4) Consult with school re: strategy to improve attendance
- (24) Did not return form
- (25) If I can't change pattern, make referral
- (26)
 - (1) Support principal in parent/student contacts
 - (2) Keep records on student attendance
 - (3) Check with school on a regular basis
- (27) No comment
- (28)
 - (1) To assist in problem cases
 - (2) To assist in counselling children with problems
 - (3) To handle legal situations
- (29) Hasn't been necessary
- (30)
 - (1) Visit the school once every week
 - (2) Assist the school in contacting students/families who have moved unexpectedly
 - (3) Assist the school in dealing with problem students/families, ARMS, F&CS, as well as any other agency
- (31) Get the child back to school

4 UNIDENTIFIED SCHOOLS

- (1) (1) Follow up to initial reporting
- (2) Reporting back to school
- (3) Follow up after student is returned to school
- (2) (1) Visit with parent/student at home and at school
- (2) Indicate the parent's responsibility re: the child's attendance
- (3) Program to be followed, follow up, consequences
- (3) A strengthened follow up to get child back to school
- (4) To contact the parent when a principal is unable to get a child to school

Question #6: What further comments have you on the functioning of the attendance department?

NORTH AREA

- (4) The attendance counsellor has dropped in twice in five years. I have not needed his services to date.
- (8) Our area A.C. provides us with excellent support. Harry Enns is always willing to go the extra mile for the students -- very effective
- (10) No problems since 1982 when had "Home Schooling" check
- (12) Although we have no attendance problems in this school I have found this Dept. very supportive in other schools where I have been V.P.
- (22) They perform a valuable service to the school. A great deal of professionalism & expertise has been demonstrated in dealing & problems
- (23) There when needed
- (24) He has always been available when we needed him
- (29) Harry is excellent/ Appreciate sincerity, attitude & knowledge of Harry

EAST AREA

- (1) We have experienced excellent co-operation & service from John Stevenson. He has helped us with many difficult cases.
- (2) Although our attendance problems are limited, our attendance counsellor reacts quickly & serves a useful counselling function to our students & their parents.
- (3) Problems not as serious or frequent in the Junior schools as in seniors schools, therefore services not as demanding
- (5) On the few occasions contacted, response immediate & satisfactory
- (8) Experience in a previous school working with an attendance counsellor who knew the community inside out (Cambridge) & took a sincere interest in his responsibilities was extremely effective
- (9) We have had virtually no contact with our attendance counsellor in the last 4½ years. Who is he or she?
- (11) Little problem/utilized A.C. once in 6 years
- (13) When the services of the attendance department are requested they respond with adequate assistance

- (15) Our A.C. is very slow in getting involved in a case. We assume a follow-up has occurred but it has not. Time within the school in preparation for a home visit is used very inefficiently. We are displeased with the quality of service, in the past I have been involved with Bill Toleff so I know how effective this program can be if immediate & effective responses are made.
- (17) Time allotted as appropriate but actual time spent not according to allotment - would appreciate closer contact from A/C after referral is made, ie. feedback from a home visit
- (19) There are some time delays between initial attempt to contact the counsellor and return calls
- (20) In most cases the school gets the support it needs

WEST AREA

- (1) Once a term appearance in assigned schools would be a useful practice.
- (3) An attendance counsellor has not visited our school during the past 1½ years (there has not been a need)
- (4) With limitations imposed by recent law changes there appears little that the A/C can do with severe truancy problems; (2) at times we need faster service than the A/C can provide; (3) Sometimes it is difficult to contact the A/C
- (7) They do their job well considering their load
- (10) None
- (11) We would appreciate having immediate service but realize that there are other schools & problems
- (12) Not on a regular basis
- (14) No time allotted to my acknowledge - perhaps because we have no reported cases, no need to contact A/C
- (15) Changes are needed
- (20) Although our attendance problems are very limited, our A/C reacts quickly and serves a useful counselling function to our students & their parents
- (22) I have not had any need for the A/C to come to my school. I hope he would not come but use his time & expertise at schools where there is an unattended problem.
- (23) Their impact has been positive. Many parents see the A/C as a higher official in the Board Ranks & sometimes that helps.

SOUTH AREA

- (2) Bill Toleff does a great job for us in this area
- (4) It works. Bill is excellent.
- (5) We are very fortunate to have an attendance counsellor who takes an interest in working closely with students & staff. He is definitely an asset to our team.
- (7) With the right person the service provided is excellent
- (8) Excellent job by our attendance counsellor/Regular meeting times between V.P. & attendance counsellor/Help in early identification of problem & better chance at solution
- (9) The rare occasion we require help it has been prompt, efficient & useful
- (10) Mr. Toleff is very helpful. We could not ask for better support.
- (15) We are very fortunate in having such an excellent attendance counsellor.
- (18) Cannot judge what we have not used this past year
- (19) Maybe contacted A/C once in four years
- (20) I need to know what they are willing to do for me
- (21) I strongly believe they should concentrate on the elementary schools because that is where attendance patterns develop. There seems to be a preoccupation with early school leaving.
- (22) Was not aware the school was given a time allotment/Don't know who he is
- (23) I don't see them as being overly effective & it depends on the situation of the individual involved. I think their skills, strategies & method of operating could be enhanced to make them more effective.
- (26) I am satisfied with the service & support currently given
- (28) Very effective
- (30) I feel our A/C is a team member of St. Andrews. He is a vital contributor to the smooth process of attendance at this school
- (31) I am satisfied that the resources are available when required

D. Section III: University Volunteer Program Awareness

Forty-seven (56%) of the responding schools were not aware of the University Volunteer Program. Nineteen (22%) were either aware or participating and the remaining schools left this section blank.

Forty-four (51%) of the schools requested a copy of the information package describing the university volunteer attendance program.

Only sixty-five schools continued beyond this point, with seventeen (26%) indicating an interest in participating next year. Nine schools (14%) felt they "might" participate, nineteen (29%) indicated they would participate if there was a need at their school and twenty schools (31%) felt they would not participate. In summary, there are forty-five potential schools for the program next year.

Of the twelve participating schools, eleven (92%) responded unconditionally that they would like to participate next year and one felt it was too early to make a decision.

Question: Has your school made any special arrangements to accommodate the program?

- (1) -counselling room provided.
-arrangements made to have pupil excused from regular class to meet with volunteer
-University Volunteer checked in with principal to give monthly updates of progress
- (2) -provide room
-support
-worked in compatible time with counsellor
- (3) Small conference room available to volunteer for counselling.
- (4) Room
- (5) a) Guidance counsellor is available for support.
b) A private location is available.
- (6) Yes, we have given over facilities for these interviews. We support this program totally.
- (7) Support
- (8) When possible the guidance office is made available. The guidance counsellor, attendance counsellor and vice-principal attempt to talk with the student volunteer to discuss progress and concerns.
- (9) We have become involved in the program.
- (10) -uses guidance office
-student calls school collect to set up times etc.
- (11) Space off campus permission.

Question #1: How do you think the program is functioning in terms of usefulness?

- (1) USEFUL. The child is hesitant to share information and feelings due to some feeling of insecurity.
- (2) USEFUL. but difficult to assess. There were few major attendance problems and in one case the student was transferred.
- (3) USEFUL.
- (4) USEFUL.
- (5) VERY USEFUL.
- (6) VERY USEFUL.
- (7) USEFUL.
- (8) USEFUL.
- (9) Too early to make a statement on usefulness.
- (10) USEFUL.
- (11) USEFUL. The student is being referred for behaviour-related problems not attendance.

Question #2: How much time does the program require of school personnel?

- (1) An appropriate amount of time.
- (2) No comment. Hard to assess at this point since only had one student for a brief time.
- (3) An appropriate amount of time.
- (4) An appropriate amount of time.
- (5) An appropriate amount of time.
- (6) An appropriate amount of time.
- (7) Too little time (staff would like to be more involved)
- (8) Too little time (staff would like to be more involved)
- (9) An appropriate amount of time.
- (10) An appropriate amount of time.
- (11) An appropriate amount of time. The volunteer usually spends a few moments informing and being informed.

Question #3: Have you received any comments from staff about the program?

- (1) POSITIVE. A more positive attitude toward academic work is noted in the classroom.
- (2) Received a brief, "Anything to help this boy stay in school".
- (3) No comments received.
- (4) POSITIVE. Beneficial to students involved.
- (5) POSITIVE. Teachers are pleased about the extra attention their students receive.
- (6) No comments received.
- (7) No comments received.
- (8) POSITIVE. Attendance and attitude of students has shown improvement in most cases.
- (9) No comments received.
- (10) POSITIVE. Our student seeks out other teachers now for additional support/ guidance etc. Our student attends regularly.
- (11) POSITIVE. Pupil looks forward to contact.

Question #3(a): Have you received any comments from parents/students about the program?

- (1) No comments received.
- (2) NEGATIVE. Parent wished her son had a "father figure" -- but no major problems.
- (3) No comments received.
- (4) No comments received.
- (5) POSITIVE. Students look forward to the weekly visits.
- (6) POSITIVE. Students like it.
- (7) POSITIVE. from student.
- (8) No comments received.
- (9) No comments received.
- (10) POSITIVE. The student completed a positive evaluation questionnaire. Parents are positive about involvement.
- (11) POSITIVE. Parents appreciate. Students enjoy.

Question #4: How are referrals decided upon in your school?

- (1) Principal and teacher discussions on progress being made by pupils in relation to known environmental influences.
- (2) Based on a teacher's records and report from vice-principal.
- (3) Referral to university volunteer an additional in-school measure.
- (4) Teachers
- (5) Decision made by school guidance counsellor and the attendance officer.
- (6) Attendance.
- (7) Through Special Ed and Counselling.
- (8) Referrals are decided upon by the guidance counsellor, student's teacher, vice-principal and attendance counsellor.
- (9) Vice-principal.
- (10) Teacher/principal discussion.
- (11) School based team discussion.

Question #5: Are you interested in participating in the program next year?

- (1) YES. We would welcome the opportunity.
- (2) YES. Anything to promote attendance in a one-to-one relationship is of some benefit to students.
- (3) YES.
- (4) YES.
- (5) YES. An excellent program.
- (6) YES. It is quite useful.
- (7) YES.
- (8) YES. This is helpful when the amount of counselling time is limited.
We are thus able to attempt to meet the needs of more students.
- (9) No decision at this time.
- (10) YES. If possible at new school.
- (11) YES. Program has been beneficial.

Question #6: What further comments/criticism or recommendation have you about the University Volunteer Program?

- (1) The program ends at the end of March. The real temptation to "hook-off" tends to be during the remaining months of the school year. I feel that it is too much to expect that the work done in the fall and winter will have an effect for a long period of time without the reinforcement of the counsellor. This was not a concern for our particular case this year.
- (2)
 1. Introduction of program and philosophy at a staff meeting.
 2. Entire staff meeting volunteers.
 3. Introduction of volunteers with child/parent at school/home.
 4. A record of achievement to compare pre and post volunteer assistance.
 5. Training of volunteers to be aware of range of attitudes and problems of students in primary, intermediate and senior division.
- (3) No Comment.
- (4) No Comment.
- (5) This is an excellent program which supplies much needed support for the students with attendance problems. Since the volunteers are not perceived by the students as school officials, rapport is extremely positive and therapeutic. The volunteers involved at Courtland have proven to be competent and extremely sensitive to the needs of the school. We strongly recommend that this program be continued.
- (6) No Comment.
- (7) No Comment.
- (8) I have been very pleased with the student volunteer. She is reliable and very concerned about helping young people.
- (9) No Comment.
- (10) Clearer outline of expectations of university to school/principal etc.
- (11) "Tell me, I forget.
Show me, I remember.
Involve me, I understand"

People make a difference. The volunteer that has worked in my school this year has had a positive effect on one special boy.

Schools Interested in Receiving an Information Package 1985-86

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Bluevale C.I. | 23. Forest Hill |
| 2. Lincoln Heights | 24. Queensmount |
| 3. Brighton | 25. Westheights |
| 4. Cedarbrae | 26. Grandview |
| 5. Empire | 27. New Dundee |
| 6. Erbsville | 28. North Wilmot |
| 7. MacGregor | 29. Galt C.I. |
| 8. Eastwood | 30. Alison Park |
| 9. Rockway | 31. Blair Road |
| 10. Grand River C.I. | 32. Centennial |
| 11. Smithson | 33. Lincoln Ave. |
| 12. Stanley Park | 34. Manchester |
| 13. Westmount | 35. Glenview Park |
| 14. Laurel V.S. | 36. Stewart Ave. |
| 15. Cameron Heights | 37. Grandview |
| 16. Alpine | 38. Parkway |
| 17. Doon | 39. Preston |
| 18. J.F. Carmichael | 40. Ryerson |
| 19. Laurentian | 41. Ayr |
| 20. Queen Elizabeth | 42. St. Andrews |
| 21. Victoria | 43. Tait St. |
| 22. Forest Heights C.I. | |

Plus three of the four schools which didn't identify themselves

Schools Interested in Participating in the University Volunteer Program

Yes	Maybe/Contingent on Need	No
Brighton	Bluevale C.I.	Bridgeport
Centennial	Lincoln Heights	Heidelberg
Howard Robertson	Conestogo	Riverside
Suddaby	Empire	Wellesley
Courtland	Erbsville	Cedarbrae
J.F. Carmichael	MacGregor	MacEachern
Laurentian	Grand River C.I.	Franklin
Grandview	Stanley Park	Rockway
Galt C.I.	Westmount	Sheppard
Hespeler	Laurel V.S.	MacKenzie King
Manchester	Victoria	Smithson
Glenview Park S.S.	Forest Heights C.I.	A,R. Kaufman
Preston	Queensmount	Doon
Grandview	Forest Hill	Forest Glen
Ayr	Westheights	New Dundee
Cecil Cornwell	North Wilmot	Avenue Road
Dickson	Alison Park	Centennial
	Blair Road	Chalmers Street
	Hillcrest	Maple Grove
	Lincoln Avenue	Highland
	Stewart Avenue	
	Parkway	
	Ryerson	
	St. Andrews	
	Tait Street	

Appendix H

Feedback Summary

Questionnaire II

A Brief Research Summary to Interested Schools,
Parents, Volunteers and Attendance Counsellors

In the 1984-85 school year, 25 students who participated in the university volunteer program were asked to complete a questionnaire describing their meetings with the volunteers. There were 13 grade one students, one grade four student, one grade five student, seven grade seven students and three grade eight students who completed questionnaires. There were three high school students and four elementary students who were referred to the program but who did not complete the questionnaire because they were unavailable at the time of distribution (i.e., they were no longer in the program, transferred schools or were absent).

The questionnaire focused on the students' perception of the meetings with the university volunteer. It was designed during the first year of the program when only senior elementary students met with volunteers. Students in grades four through eight completed the questionnaire individually and returned it to the university volunteer assigned to their school. Children in grade one had the questions read and paraphrased to ensure they understood what was being asked. Some words were difficult for the younger children to understand. For example, when asked if the meetings were "convenient", eight of the thirteen grade one participants made no response, three responded neutrally, (i.e., neither convenient nor inconvenient) and one felt the meetings were "slightly convenient". In comparison, all of the children in grades four through eight responded and felt the meetings were "convenient".

Nineteen of the participating students (76%) would definitely want to be in the program again. Five students responded "maybe" and one did not comment. The students also responded positively (52% definitely and 36% maybe) to meeting with a different university student.

Finally, the meetings were described by the children as being both helpful (88%) and enjoyable (88%).

I would like to offer my thanks to all involved: the School Board for allowing the study; the attendance counsellors and the schools for their co-operation and interest; the parents who allowed their children to participate; the volunteers who assisted by distributing, collecting, paraphrasing and in some instances filling out questionnaires; and finally, the children who were quite eager to help.


Charlotte Gibson

Appendix I

Feedback Summary

Questionnaire III

ATTENDANCE DEPARTMENT SURVEY - - JUNE, 1985

Four (4) out of a possible five (5) attendance surveys were returned.

All four of the respondents felt their role was to facilitate/advise and monitor the university attendance program.

One respondent felt "very satisfied" with their role, commenting that they could choose their own level of participation. Three counsellors felt "satisfied" with their role, two did not comment and one felt the program could function without the involvement of the attendance department.

In terms of usefulness, there was one "very useful" and three "useful" categories chosen. One counsellor could see the value in the program if it continued with some regularity. Another felt it allows more one-on-one attention than counsellors can provide and further commented on its usefulness in prevention and early identification.

All respondents felt the program required "an appropriate amount of their time", with one commenting that time was not the problem, the scheduling of time was. The other respondent elaborated that s/he was able to govern the amount of time given to the program by scheduling.

All respondents felt the program has affected the image of attendance counsellors. Comments ranged from the program being perceived as a positive move, to indicating that counsellors are interested in the preventive aspect of attendance and highlighting how thinly spread they are in terms of carrying out longterm support. One comment noted that the program makes principals and staff realize that truancy is but a symptom of many other problems. The final respondent felt that due to the student's initial contact with the volunteer, their role as a last resort would appear to have more authority.

All respondents received positive comments about the program from principals, vice-principals, guidance counsellors, teachers, etc. One principal commented that it was "too bad it had to terminate at the end of March".

Two respondents had no feedback from parents/students about the program. One counsellor received positive comments and noted that students looked forward to participating in the program. Both positive and negative feedback was received by one counsellor who

commented that parents contacted noticed a difference in their child and that the student who decided to opt out of the program was also trying to opt out of anything involving school.

Three counsellors were involved in the referral process and one was not.

Three counsellors are interested in participating in the program next year and one is not. It is interesting to note that the respondent who is not interested in further participation was not involved in the referral process. This respondent felt the individual school should work with the university - not the attendance department. Other respondents would be "disappointed" if it were discontinued. They felt the survey increased awareness and new schools would hopefully participate next year. One counsellor would be interested in participating within the same scope.

Future direction of the program brought comments ranging from expansion to improving student attitude toward education to an emphasis on junior grades (a preventative measure) to discontinuance (have schools work directly with the university).

Three respondents chose to further comment on the university volunteer program. One wondered if it could operate without the attendance department's involvement. The school would work directly with the university. Two counsellors elaborated on the benefits to both the student and the volunteer.

In summary, the department feels the program is worthwhile but has administrative/co-ordination concerns.

Appendix J

Attendance Data

June 1983

School Attendance Data

1. Number of Students identified as habitually absent --- 559
2. # of males - 292
of females - 267
3. Grade Distribution
K - 31
1 - 20
2 - 16
3 - 20
4 - 25
5 - 38
6 - 55
7 - 161
8 - 158
4. Number of Instruction Days Lost - 13,571

Appendix K

Proposed Co-ordinator's

Job Description

PROPOSED JOB DESCRIPTION

POSITION

Volunteer Co-ordinator

RESPONSIBLE TO QUALIFICATIONS

Degree in human services or acceptable equivalent. Awareness of the needs of the Waterloo Board of Education it's children and volunteers. Previous experience working with volunteers. Certificate in Volunteer Management would be an asset.

POSITION SUMMARY

The successful candidate will be responsible for the recruitment of volunteers in all designated programs of the Board. He/she will ensure that accurate records are maintained on volunteers. In co-operation with teaching staff or staff of special programs, the co-ordinator will provide orientation and training for volunteers. The media and other sources will be utilized to recruit volunteers and promote the role of volunteers within the Board of Education. The co-ordinator will organize awards and ensure that volunteers receive recognition. He/she will provide support, direction and supervision of volunteers. Any additional administrative duties related to this position will also be the responsibility of the co-ordinator

SPECIFIC RESPONSIBILITIES TO INCLUDE:

Responsible for the recruitment of volunteers in all designated programs of the Board by:

- maintaining up to date records of the needs programs have for volunteers
- preparing volunteer job descriptions in collaboration with program staff
- contacting and speaking to groups, collages, universities, schools, churches, etc. in order to recruit volunteers
- screening potential volunteers and obtaining initial personal information
- matching volunteers to program and Board needs

- preparing suitable program information packages geared toward educating prospective volunteers about the needs of the Board and how they can be involved
- ensuring that all medical requirements are met in accordance with existing legislation (e.g. immunization)

Ensuring that accurate records are maintained on all volunteers by:

- keeping an up-to-date file of personal information on volunteer (e.g. change of address)
- keeping an accurate volunteer attendance record
- keeping an up-to-date training record of volunteer (eg. First Aid Course)
- contacting volunteers on a regular basis to review and update personal information

Provide orientation and training of volunteers by:

- providing volunteers with an overview of the Board of Education, its role in the community and the services it provides
- informing volunteers of the needs of children in specific programs
- introducing volunteers to their assigned program and staff person
- providing volunteers with a job description and an explanation of their duties and responsibilities
- designing and implementing training programs designed to meet specific and general needs of volunteers
- explaining relevant Board of Education policies and procedures for volunteers (e.g. taking a child out of school, insurance coverage, accident reports).
- ensuring that program/teaching staff provide volunteers with program specific information (e.g. school hours, breaks, recesses)
- keeping abreast of the current trends in the utilization of volunteer

Recruiting Volunteers and Promoting the Role of Volunteers by:

- utilizing public service announcements provided by the media to recruit volunteers
- encouraging media sources to report on the role of volunteers within the Board of Education and the work they do.
- utilizing volunteer co-ordination services (Universities, Colleges, Volunteer Placement Bureau).

- requesting opportunities to speak with any possible sources of volunteer
- preparing articles for inclusion in the media, journals, newsletters etc. in an effort to recruit volunteers and promote their activities
- requesting media coverage of awards presentations, volunteer recognition banquets etc.

Organizes awards and ensures volunteers receive recognition by:

- ensuring volunteers are accurately and appropriately recognized for the service they have given
- ensuring that volunteers are formally recognized by the Board of Education not just the specific programs
- profiling volunteers in media, newsletters, special interest newsletters
- arranging for the presentation of certificates to volunteers who have successfully completed training programs provided by the Board of Education

Provide support, direction and supervision of volunteers by:

- contacting and when appropriate meeting with volunteers on a regular basis
- obtaining regular feedback from staff on the performance of individual volunteers
- ensuring that appropriate experience and training is provided for volunteers in order to meet their needs for satisfaction through involvement
- providing feedback to volunteers on their progress and the contribution they are making
- maintaining open lines of communication with volunteers
- ensuring that grievances of volunteers are communicated to the responsible authority (program director/staff person)
- arranging transfer of volunteer between program as necessary or as requested
- ensuring that volunteer maintain appropriate relationships with children, staff and other volunteers
- terminating volunteers when necessary

Carries out administrative and other duties relevant to the position by:

- ensuring that accident and incident reports are completed and submitted promptly to the Board office

- recommending policy and procedural implementation and revision to the Superintendent of Special Education as identified
- preparing reports as requested
- attending meetings, training events as directed
- recommending new ways to meet the needs of children, programs through the use of volunteers
- co-operating as appropriate with all programs and services within the Board of Education
- performing any other relevant duties considered necessary by the Superintendant of Special Education

SOURCE: The Guelph Association for the Mentally Retarded.